

# THE WITCHER<sup>®</sup>

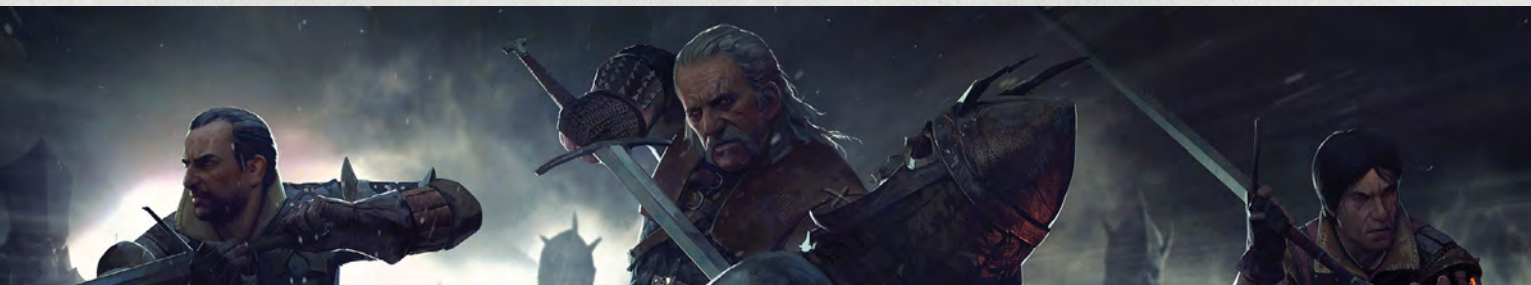
## A WITCHER'S JOURNAL

For a witcher, knowledge is as important as any sword.









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PRINTED IN CANADA.

WI11021 ISBN 978-1-950911-05-9



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# The Golden Age of Witchers

*It's been a few hundred years and people have forgotten what it used to be like. They've forgotten where their nursery rhymes come from, and why they bar their doors at night. We witchers exist for a reason: to slog through the muck and grime and slay the monstrosities other people are incapable of facing.*

—Erland of Larvik



Heh, so here's the deal. Few months ago, I was makin' my way back from the Tir Tochair—on business, of course—and I happened to come into possession of chest of odds and ends. Nothing all that interestin' if ya ask me, heh. 'Til I found an musty old book at the bottom of a stack of outdated magic theories and whatnot. Didn't have a title. Nothing fancy about the thing. Hell, think if I hadn't had the sense to treat it careful it may 'ave come apart in my hands! But yers truly's a man of culture and knowledge! I know a rare find when I see it!

A few minutes of careful handlin' and I was off to market! Got the book open and ya'd never guess what I found: notes from a witcher named Erland of Larvik!

Now ya may notta heard of ol' Erland and I wouldn't blame ya! When the keeps went down a lot of kings scrubbed every mention of witchers they could find.

Nobody knows much about Erland of Larvik. There're some mentions of him 'round the world but it turns out he was a pretty big deal among his guild. One of the foundin' members of the Witcher's Gryphon School and their first Grandmaster! This son of bitch, rid the halls of Kaer y Seren of specters with his own silver, traveled the whole Continent slayin' monsters! Heh, the book I picked up was some sorta compiled list of all the notes he took over centuries of witchin'.

Bein' the level-headed, pragmatist I am, I saw an opportunity! Witcher's are all but gone these days and the monsters are comin' back. We need witcher smarts more than ever now! So here I am with the "Master of The Northern Intelligentsia" himself, Brandon of Oxenfurt, transcribin' a witcher's journal on huntin' monsters! Without further ado, the introduction's a real piece of work so we'll copy that right in. Enjoy!

—Rodolf Kazmer

## The Ending Of An Era

*Kaer y Seren has fallen—buried beneath a mountain of snow and ice. I can't say how many of my brethren escaped the avalanche but I saw the culprits.*

*I shouldn't be surprised that the sorcerer's envy would turn to rage someday. No doubt, the kings of the north and the mages of the council will arrive soon to pick through the snow and rubble in hopes of finally unearthing the "Secrets of the Gryphon." This will be the last time I underestimate the blinding greed of humanity.*

*I believe it's time for the Gryphon to leave this god forsaken place. People have forgotten what us witcher were created for in the first place. They've forgotten the monsters that lurk in the night and the terrors that we witchers shield them from. Now they lash out at their protectors. No doubt, the other schools will come under siege soon—if they haven't already fallen.*

*The realms of humanity will twist these atrocities to their liking in their histories. I have no doubt witchers of all school will soon be known as nothing more than monsters and devils. But our purpose is beyond the whims of frightened kings and arrogant mages.*

*I leave this journal and the others bound with it, to set the ledger straight and make sure that the knowledge of the witchers will be preserved. When the last witcher has fallen, and the monsters begin to creep from the crypts and caves of the world, humanity will begin to remember. And on that day, I hope these journals can be used to protect the realms even past my death.*



## Life Before Witchers

*I might as well have grown up on a ship. When I think back on my childhood, I think I spent more time on the waves than on solid ground.*

*My mother, Vanja, was a spear maiden from Hindarsfjall and to this day, I've no idea who my father was. An unlucky fisherman from the Redanian coast, I imagine. My mother and I shared little love and she spoke rarely. I don't doubt my mother only kept me to keep Freya from punishing her.*

*Hindarsfjall was a different place before the witcher order. These days Skelligers are often unwilling to hire witchers but they've benefited from us as much as the rest of the Continent. Back in the day you didn't go near the shore if you weren't at a dock and you didn't venture into the forest unless you weren't keen on seeing the next morning. Every now and again, the older lads would dare each other to travel into the mountains and maybe a quarter of them would come back. If they weren't captured and eaten by a cyclops, they probably wound up in the dirty, carrion-filled nest of a roc. Nearly a quarter of the drakkar that left port were torn apart by screeching sirens and the truly unlucky ones were dragged down to the depth by a kraken or some other beast of the deep. If a village fell under a curse or a night wraith manifested in a graveyard, that village was abandoned until a druid could set the place right. If they even could.*

*I was a deckhand by the time I could walk and I was swinging an axe as soon as I could lift it. My mother's fellow crewmen gave me what little "raising" I got. They kept me busy, tying ropes, fetching things, and sharpening swords and axes. On raids I was the ship's night guard. I slept on the top deck, always keeping a weather eye on the sky or the railing of the ship. If I saw a siren or the tentacle of a kraken I was to run to the ship's bell and ring it with all my might. If I didn't make to the bell in time I could at least scream loud enough to wake the crew. One deckhand was a small price to pay in those days. I imagine no one would mourn long if they came to the top deck the next morning and found nothing but a bloody smear leading to the railing.*

## The First Witchers

*I was ten years old when I made port in Novigrad under the banners of the Heymaey for the last time. I'd become a wild young man, and my mother was keen on getting rid of me. Just a month prior I had drawn steel on one of the new deckhands for calling me a bastard and he was still recovering.*

*When a wealthy-looking mage approached her asking to buy her deckhand for reasonable price she lept at the chance. Of course, she probably would have settled for a half-pint of warm ale and a rusty dagger at that point. The deal was struck*

*and my destiny was written. I left with the Sorcerer Alzur that very evening.*

*I never knew much of Alzur. I traveled with him for several weeks as he collected a horde of children, including myself, but he rarely uttered a word to us except to ask us questions about our health. When we asked what he had planned for us, all he said was that we would be the next step in a "revolutionary experiment." When we asked why he needed children all he said was that adults had "proved unsatisfactory."*

*At the mountain castle of Rissberg, the 37 other children and I trained day and night to prepare ourselves for the experiments Alzur and his associates had planned. Climbing cliff-sides, running obstacle courses peppered with traps, dodging heavy pendulums while blindfolded, and many other trials I've forgotten over the years.*

*We were pushed to our limits and the slightest slip up could mean death. Four of my fellow students died before the mages had even begun their experimentation. The rest of us managed to build a kinship. We were suffering but we were suffering together and somehow that made it somewhat more bearable. I got into a number of fights in those early days but in the end we all had to report to the mages the next morning so none of us could afford to hold a grudge long.*

*I was around 11 then and I had started to find my eyes wandering to a young Aedirnian girl by the name of Jagoda. I don't really know whether it was genuine affection or a bond forged by trauma, but it was real to me at the time. After all these years it's hard to remember details but I do remember she used to sit on the castle walls with me before bed. We kept ourselves sane by complaining about the mages, and the trials, and the terrible food. It made us feel human again. Even if no one cared about us, we cared for each other.*

*When the time came for the true experiments, our resolve began to fade. We started a regiment of bubbling mushroom stews and soapy alchemical teas and at first, all seemed well. We became stronger and faster and our bodies grew more powerful. But as the experimentation continued the concoctions the mages prepared for us became harsher and most of the girls quickly took ill. Jagoda was among them. I tried to take care of her but most nights I just wound up talking with her and bringing her cool water.*

*When the sorcerers started their experimentations it grew clear that the majority of us wouldn't survive and the girls would fair the worst. But they pressed on. For more than a month, our numbers dwindled. One of us would be lead into the laboratory and all we would hear of them was the screaming and the begging.*

*Jagoda was gone within the first week—cold and buried with the other failed prospects. I did my best to bury her mangled body in the makeshift graveyard the other prospects and I*



had built. I didn't speak for days after that but I ran faster and I struck harder. Every inch of me was on fire and I had nowhere to go but forward.

Nearly a month in, Alzur and his compatriots saw their first success. One of the younger boys survived the mutations with his mind and body intact. After countless deaths, the first witcher was born.

I was mutated less than a week later and I think it was only my hatred for the sorcerers that kept me alive. More than two centuries later I still have never felt pain like I did on that operating table.

When they had finished mutating all of us only a handful of boys remained. We were inspected thoroughly and tested constantly. The mages had gathered professionals from all over the Continent to train us in different skills: hunters from Kaedwen, alchemists from Vicovaro, and swordsmen from every corner of the map came to teach us. In theory, the mages themselves would train us in magic.

Long sessions with huntsmen gave us an unparalleled knowledge of tracking and hunting. Late nights with alchemists ensured that we would be able to craft the mutagenic concoctions they had tailored for us. Grueling, painful practices with the swordsmen hardened us into lethal weapons. We were everything the mages and their unseen masters wanted. Almost.

The mutations had opened our bodies to the flow of chaos but even so we proved too weak to channel magic like a born magician and this was the turning point for the mages. I never knew what terse arguments and pathetic groveling had transpired but after we showed our limited magical talent we were banished from Castle Rissberg and the few mages who supported us went with. Their project had proven less than profitable and the Brotherhood of Sorcerers would no longer support them. Alzur, his mentor Cosimo, and some of the others joined us. They took us to an abandoned castle in the Kestrel mountains called Castle Morgraig and continued their testing—no doubt seeking to validate the cost of their investment.

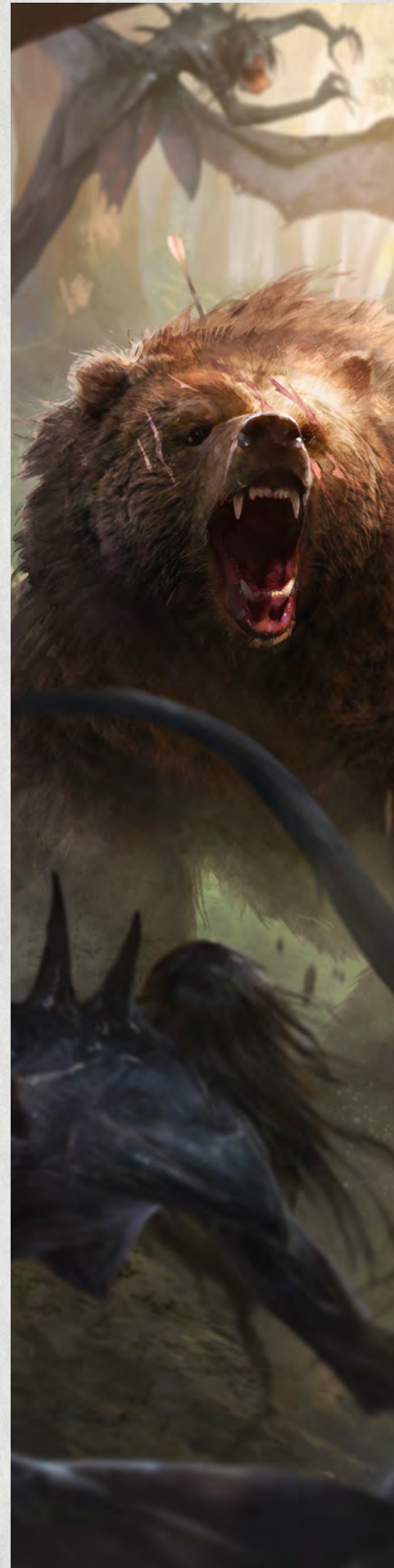
Cosimo developed the signs for us, simple magic that we could manage even with our limited capabilities. To a mage they were crude and unsophisticated, but to a young man who had never even considered the possibility of magic they were more than impressive enough. I practiced long into the night, perfecting my hand gestures and willing my control over the chaos to strengthen. The magic was the only thing I still managed to find joy in save for the rare conversations with my fellow witchers.

## Sir Lywelyn

By the time I was 15 or 16, the first class of witchers had come into their own and I was among them. There were only 5 of us but Alzur and Cosimo already had gathered more children to be our underclassmen. Soon we would be sent out into the world to hunt monsters. I can't say I know how the other four felt about this. None of wanted to talk about our fears or misgivings after what we had been through.

For my part I was prepared. Months before our "maiden voyage" our sword trainer had found reason to quarrel with Alzur and his vacant, charred room was given to a wandering knight one of the other mages had met on their travels. Taliesin Bleddyn Yorath aep Lywelyn was his name but we called him "Gryphon" for the black Gryphon on his shield. Gryphon was different from the hard-eyed sellswords that had trained us prior. From the first day we trained with him I could tell he believed in something—he had a purpose greater than surviving to the next sunrise. The knight errant taught us southern sword styles and techniques to ignore pain and fight through grievous wounds but he also spoke of our "Duty." He believed that we had been created for a reason. We weren't the result a failed experiment and we had great works to do in this world.

I doubt any of the others took his soliloquizing seriously but it resonated with me. I had begun this journey as an angry young man and ever since Jagoda had passed on years earlier I had nothing but anger and







*grief in my heart. Thinking our suffering had a meaning gave me peace of mind. I took Gryphon's words to heart and when I first set out on The Path it was with a single purpose: To protect the people of the Continent from the threats they couldn't face.*

## **On the Path**

*The First Age of Witchers that began with my four brothers and myself was a strange time for all involved. Settlements all around the Continent were under assault from monsters but they hadn't called for aid from the mages at Morgraig. When we witchers first made contact with humanity neither of us knew what to expect. The only people we had ever interacted with were our teachers and the mages who made us, and the peasants had never even heard of a witcher before.*

*I barely remember my first hunt—I believe it was a horde of rotfiends in southern Kaedwen. I remember the look of confusion and concern on the alderman's face when I approached him. I could tell he didn't know what to make of me. I stated my price—a modest sum to pay for repairing my armor and weapons and buying materials for my potions—and he agreed cautiously. I was a stranger and my eyes betrayed my alien nature but he had lost too much to the rotfiend horde to turn down any aid I could offer.*

*The hunt was far from easy. At that time we didn't have half the knowledge we have now. The first rotfiend I slew was impaled on the end of my blade when its body erupted and I barely managed to turn my face away in time to avoid the caustic bile. But I learned and I planned. With traps, and magic, and superior skill I must have killed 10 or 20 rotfiends single handedly. I returned to the alderman with word of the hunt and got my pay. The alderman was still cautious of me but the townsfolk were grateful. They even offered me a round at the tavern.*

*That was how it was everywhere I went. The dukes and aldermen were wary of*

*my new order, and the mages were insulted by my abrupt replacement of their "heroic" positions, but the peasants were cautiously thankful to the man who saved them from the ravening beasts at their doorstep. I spoke with them, drank with them from time to time, and even made a few friends. I would travel from town to village to city, clearing trade routes, breaking curses, and saving innocents. I took money for repairing my gear and preparing my potions but I never left a village suffering for lack of coin.*

*I thought good word would spread and perhaps the world would become less wary of witchers. But I couldn't have been more wrong. Before the end of the year, the churches of the north had begun spreading venomous tales about my mutated brethren and I. I did my best to calm the people who now began to see me as a monster but after a while that became nearly impossible. Their priests and "wise men" had told them of the "ungodly witchmen from the mountains".*

*As the colder weather started to set in, I headed back to Morgraig. There I met with my surviving brothers, mourned the fallen, and told stories of my year on the Path. I must admit, even when peasants met me warmly I still couldn't connect with them like I could with my brothers. We shared an experience and a life that no other person could fully understand. Every year I set off on the Path and I always looked forward to wintering at Morgraig and sharing the tales I had collected with whoever was lucky enough to make it home.*

*For a few decades, that was how it was. A spring, summer, and fall full of deadly hunts and vicious curses and then a winter of warm fires, training in the mountains, and celebrating another year alive with my brothers and the boys who would follow in our footsteps.*

## **The Fracturing**

*Unfortunately, things couldn't last. By the time I was in my late 40s the Order of the Witchers had begun to fracture. Alzur, Cosimo had moved on, leaving only a hand-*



ful of mages to perform our mutations and our order no longer had a leader. The cracks rapidly began to show in our unified facade.

Witchers were traveling the entirety of the known Continent and often they crossed paths. For the most part this wasn't a problem. Whoever found the contract first claimed it, and the other witcher would respect that claim. After all, there were plenty of contracts and plenty of settlements in need. But as we spread we began to quarrel amongst ourselves. Witchers would return from the path telling tales of brothers who tricked them out of contracts or drew steel on them, threatening to kill them if they didn't move on. There were a number of confrontations in the halls of Morgraig, each one more tense than the last.

I can't recall when the first blood was shed. It wasn't long after the first squabbles. I returned to Morgraig one winter to find one of our own, Rhys, cut from shoulder to waist and covered in his own blood. The Swallow potion had kept him alive and he told us a bone chilling tale. Deep in the forests of Kaedwen he had taken on a contract for the head of a chort that had been terrorizing a highland village. As he had finished negotiating the fee, another of our brothers had entered the village seeking to make a deal for the very same creature. His name was Arnaghad and I knew him well. Arnaghad was a titan of a man from the depth of Gemmera. He must have been near 9-hands wide at the shoulder and always draped himself in a battered bearskin cloak. Though he commanded the respect of many of our brothers, Arnaghad didn't feel the same kinship I so valued. When he learned that such a lucrative contract had slipped his grasp his blood must have boiled. Arnaghad found Rhys in the wilds outside the village and met him, blade in hand. Rhys had only managed to escape with his life by calling the attention of the chort and slipping away into the wilderness when it charged Arnaghad and him.

We had allowed the arguments and threats to go on too long and now a witcher's blood had been spilt. We prepared for Arnaghad's return, intent on meting out his punishment and ending the infighting that had begun.

When Arnaghad returned it was with a posse of other brothers. No doubt he expected a fight but his pride wouldn't allow him to flee. I don't know what speech he had given to others: likely some long-winded diatribe against the Order and our "stagnating traditions." When we met them in the great hall, Arnaghad's cloak was already thrown back, his steel sword gripped in his gloved fist. I think many of us hoped he would see reason and go quietly. Of course I doubt that would have ever occurred to Arnaghad.

I had never fought to the death with another witcher before. A thousand times I had drawn steel against some unlucky foe and now I was on the receiving end of a whirlwind of steel and magic. My body moved on instinct, watching for a spark of light or the glint of steel hurtling towards me. After laying low one of Arnaghad's band I paused for just a moment to survey my surroundings. Enough time to leave me open to the charging kinslayer who had started this whole mess. Arnaghad's slash nearly ended my life on the spot, smashing through my Quen shield and splitting my face open like a burst seam. I kept fighting through streaming blood and hazy vision, dodging Arnaghad's offensive and managing to knock him to his back with a well placed Aard. The battle continued but I remember very little of it.

By the end of the night Arnaghad and his kinslayers had fled into the dark of the mountains, licking their wounds. The Order of Witchers had survived but its numbers had rapidly dwindled and its morale was deeply wounded.

In the aftermath of the first fracture, the Witcher Order was wounded and unstable. We began to argue amongst ourselves.

"Why do we fight for people who hate us?"

"Why do we accept such low payment?"

"Why don't we kill humans or elves or whoever else we're paid to kill?"

Many of my brothers had become disillusioned by the tenets of our order and there was little I could do to change their minds. Times had changed and the glory and status we had once enjoyed was long gone. Many of our newest brothers had no memory of the First Age of Witchers and they had grown restless. Years crept by and the tensions grew, spreading through our ranks. Witchers who traveled south began encountering new witchers, wearing a medallion of a bear's head or of a curling viper. They relayed tales of a new witcher school called School of the Bear, built by Arnaghad in the Amell Mountains. They told of the new witchers of the south who sold their skills to anyone for any contract and of a cruel betrayal that nearly led to the death of Arnaghad and gave birth to a secretive order of witchers who embraced the poison of the viper.

As these tales spread the rifts in our order widened. Before long, another group of young witchers split from the Order. Unlike the kinslaying bears, these witchers split off from us with an intent to form a new school. These witchers, who fashioned cat's-head medallions for themselves, were fed up with the poor treatment they received at the hands of the commonfolk and believed they could form a better order that would surpass the Order of Witchers and command the respect of the Continent. Fifteen or 20 of them stole away in the night, taking



a great deal of our mutagenic compounds and alchemical tools with them. At the time we had no idea how wrong they were when they boasted about the improvements they would make with future witchers. Search parties were sent to find them and retrieve the mutagens but by then they cats had used their knowledge to obscure their tracks beyond recognition.

## The End of the Order of Witchers

For a time we soldiered on. In the spring we would go out on the Path, but now we met with not only the derision of the people but the threat of other witchers who might try to kill us for our contracts. Eventually, we began dividing up the Continent by schools to keep from driving ourselves to extinction. The attitude at Morgraig became more utilitarian and my brothers began to lose any spark they once possessed. We were becoming the grim servants of death the world viewed us as.

I remember the winter I left Morgraig. Another year on the Path had passed and I made my way back up into the mountains to meet with my brothers at Morgraig. When I arrived at the keep, the halls were dark, lit only by a few torches and the great hall's hearth. A number of my brothers sat at the great table, trading stories and drinking from battered tankards. Others lingered near windows, watching the mountains. Though the fires remained lit the warmth had left Morgraig. The keep was more a sanctuary than a home. A place hidden far away from the world, where the last witchers of the once proud Order could hide.

I was determined not to deal another blow to the Order that had been my family for so many decades. I wouldn't cause a massacre and I would cause as little bad blood as possible. With my 13 closest friends I said my piece and we left Morgraig that night. The meaning of the Order of Witchers had been all but forgotten and I couldn't let it fade away. No one stopped us and no one came after us.

I had lost my home but much of my family remained. We moved northwest, heading for the Dragon Mountains and the coasts of Poviss. Morgraig was not the only keep the mages had used to house their experiments. In my travels I had heard of one other, Kaer y Seren, an old fortress on a cliffside by the water. Its halls had been empty since the torture and death Alzur and Cosimo wrought had woven a death curse over the foundation of the keep. When we arrived we found the castle exactly as expected. Specters of failed witchers roamed the corpse-strewn hall and but the castle hummed with power. Within the castle's courtyard, a standing stone stood, erected by elves centuries ago at a confluence of air magic. No doubt its presence was the reason the mages had the castle built. We set about dispatching the suffering souls of our predecessors and reclaiming the keep in the name of the witchers. From our seat at the top of the world, we would uphold the honorable goals

we had been built for. In honor of my long-dead mentor, I took up the mantle of the Gryphon, forging a school that would serve as a reminder to the people of what witchers were meant to be.

In the wake of the fracturing, the remaining order migrated from the Castle Morgraig, seeking solitude somewhere in the west. Eventually we would meet again, noting the wolf-head medallions of our former brothers.

## The "Golden Age"

Among witchers sometimes you'll hear the term "The Golden Age." More often than not they are referring to the time after the fracturing of the Order of Witchers. I believe some scholars refer to it as a Second Era of Witchers.

Surprisingly enough the fracturing of the witcher order had lead to a more effective organization for us witchers. Spread across the Continent and each making more witchers independently, it was no longer the task of 60 or 70 witchers to patrol the entire Continent from Nilfgaard to Kovir. Each school patrolled their own path and when a Gryphon met with a Bear each knew they had their territory and any infighting wouldn't be worth the bloodshed. We managed to broker peace and live as somewhat estranged brothers rather than bitter enemies.

In the mountains of Poviss my brothers and I had begun training new witchers who would wear the Gryphon medallion. Adjusting was difficult at first but soon the fires were roaring in the great hall and life returned to the way it had been. But this time, we were all of the same mind and our practices reflected our principles. My brothers and I stood as examples to the younger witchers we trained and we taught them to have honor in their practice and conviction in their hearts. Kaer y Seren was not a dingy fortress filled with resentful hunters and tormented children. Together with our head sorcerer we crafted a new discipline: one whose focus was on magic, preparedness, and flexibility. The training was still strenuous and still many children did not survive the mutations. But the older brothers and I guided the son of the Gryphon through their training and when one fell we honored their passing and buried them properly. The fate of a witcher—no matter the school—can be harrowing but among the Gryphons you knew your suffering had purpose and your brothers would support you.

Even as the Grandmaster of the newly founded Gryphon School I set out every spring on the Path, traversing the lands from Poviss to Cintra and from the Arcsea to the Kestrel Mountains. I fought hordes of necrophages in nobles' crypts, hunted draconids in the peaks of the Kestrel mountains, and faced off against some of the most dangerous monsters on the Continent. I can't count the scars I received but most of them have faded by now. Every winter I returned with stories aplenty and once again, just as when I was a young lad, I sat with my brothers



and the sons of the Gryphon and told tales of the Path around a roaring fire. Tapestries were hung in the halls of Kaer y Seren, depicting our triumphs and our tribulations. We made something of ourselves, harkening back to the knightly path we were meant to follow.

Of course, when we came down from the keep the kings and queens of the world were still wary of us. At the time I didn't blame them. Five independent schools of hunters, armed with powers far beyond that of any soldier are cause for concern. No doubt the churches and mages of the North still whispered poison in their ears as well. But for the Gryphon, this was only a minor obstacle. We acted with honor and never raised our blades against a human who hadn't earned their death. There were villages in the north where the deeds of the Gryphon school were celebrated and I was called to the courts of kings more than once for my advice and my skills. On my travels I made close friends and powerful alliances. Granted, many of those allies are long dead by now but I treasure their memories.

As time crept forward in its never ending march, the neutrality we had fought to maintain was tested numerous times. The race wars between Human and Non-Human flared constantly and in the periods of peace between races, human kingdoms would take up arms against each other over borders and other squabbles. The Vipers and the Cats found their contracts among the massacres and soon our doorstep was flooded with kings, rebels, and revolutionaries. Each one looking to add witchers to the ranks of their army. But a witcher's purpose is not to fight on a battlefield and it is not to slit the throat of an unpopular monarch. Even when the Appanage of Kovir called to us to defend them from the Redanians we did not answer the call. Once a witcher has broken their neutrality, they cannot go back.

During the race war sparked by the death of Cregennan of Lod and Lara Dorren we protected innocents from the spec-

ters and cursed ones that their rulers and warriors brought into the world. When Falka's Rebellion spread blood across the north, we hunted the necrophages and vampires that preyed on the survivors. We continued to stand as a barrier between the realms of humanity and the devils and monsters that came from beyond.

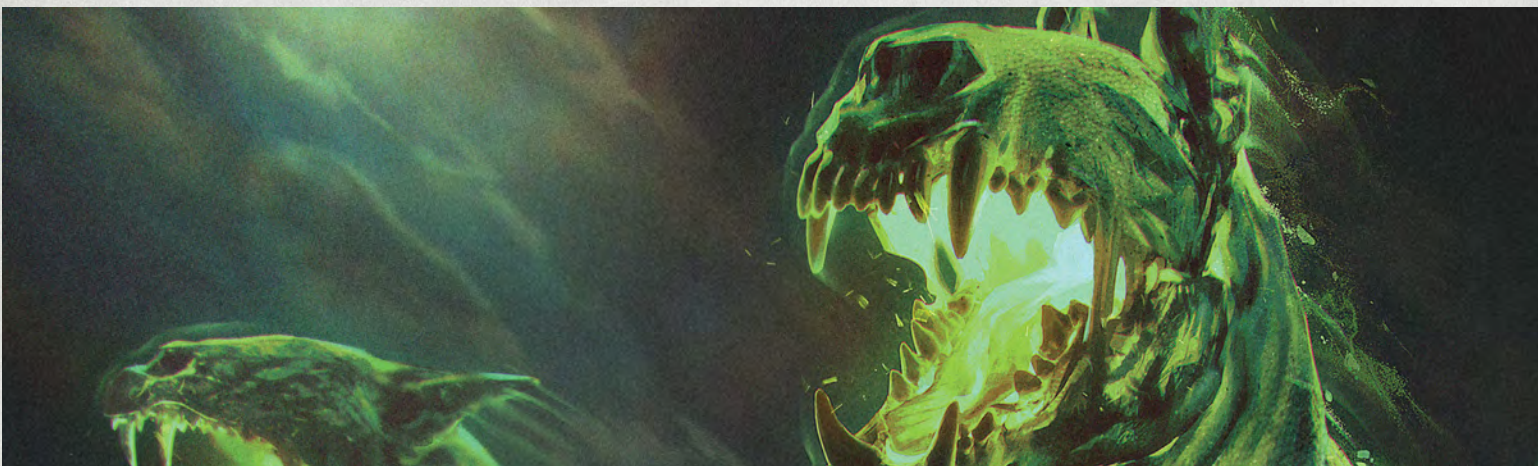
It would be a lie to say I never raised my blade in opposition to a person. Even a Witcher hears the call of steel when faced with evil in the form of a man and I've drawn blood many a time in defense of my friends. But never for coin.

## The End of the Golden Age

The middle of the 1160s saw the end of the "Golden Age of Witchers." Despite the difficulties we had with the people of the Continent we had been too successful. By the end of the 1160s monsters had been all but eradicated. In the entirety of a year on the Path, I might find one contract for the extermination of a nekker nest or a cave troll. No doubt many monsters had learned from the deaths of their kin and had hidden away in the mountains or underground. With hardly any monsters left to hunt, the prospect of powerful mutants unbidden to a king became more threatening than that of a world without monster hunters. In the absence of monsters, we became the monsters in the eyes of the people.

As our usefulness began to fade, the churches of the Continent chose their time to strike. Anti-witcher propaganda was everywhere. The church of Kreve blamed the witchers for the outbreaks of the plague that were ravaging Temeria. It wasn't long before the once respected witcher was known to the world as the "mangy, greedy, Witchman".

And I suppose that leads all the way up to the Grandmaster of the Gryphon School, sitting in a damp freezing cave writing his memoirs in hopes that someone will read them and see the light before the world slaughters its last guard and wonders why there are armies amassing on its border.





# Reading a Monster

## Monsters & Weapons

Unlike their Feral counterparts, most Sapient monsters are capable of anything a human is capable of. A Sapient monster that has hands is capable of wielding weapons. In most cases, monsters don't do this because their natural weapons are just as potent (if not more so). However, if you want, you can give a Sapient monster a weapon and a weapon skill.

## Claw Reliability

Every weapon a monster has possesses a Reliability, since a monster may choose to block with its claw, tail, and whatnot. Just like other weapons, once a monster's weapon has been reduced to 0 Reliability, it is rendered useless. This effect is permanent; but monsters with Regeneration heal Reliability at a rate of 1 point per day.

## Crushing Force

Some creatures strike with such incredible force that their attacks cannot be parried and they do double ablation damage to weapons, shields, or armor.

In *A Witcher's Journal*, the monsters are present in a more easily read reference format than in the Core Rule Book. That being said, there are some important bits of clarification.

## Category

This image shows you what category the monster falls under. *A Witcher's Journal* is organized by monster category, so all monsters of a certain category are grouped together.

## Difficulty

Here you can find the monster's general difficulty. Difficulty is split up between the actual power rating of the monster (Easy, Medium, Hard) and their complexity (Simple, Complex, Difficult). The higher either of those values is, the more difficult the monster is to deal with.

## Intelligence

Here you can find the monster's intelligence level. Feral monsters are non-sapient beasts,

which are incapable of making complicated plans or interacting with others intellectually. In combat, Feral creatures always attack the closest target or the target that recently attacked them. While they aren't intelligent, Feral creatures gain instinct bonuses to the Awareness and Wilderness Survival skills that have already been factored in. Sapient creatures, on the other hand, are capable of thinking, making plans, and often interacting or speaking with other creatures. These creatures have an intelligence score above 1, can formulate plans, and in many cases can be reasoned with.

## Special Senses

Here you can find the monster's special senses. These include: Night Vision (which negates penalties for dim-light conditions), Superior Night Vision (which negates penalties for complete darkness), & Scent Tracking (which allows the creature to perceive things by smell alone and grants a bonus to Awareness).

16
17

Skill Base	
Acrobatics	10
Awareness	10
Brawling	14
Courage	15
Endurance	20
Intimidation	14
Intimidation	14
Physique	20
Rolling Combat	14
Secret Magic	14
Stealth	5
Wilderness Survival	7

Armor	
Regeneration	4

Resistances	
Poison, Bleeding	

Immunities	

Susceptibilities	
Necrophage Oil, Mouldrot, Boudit	

Dodge Base	
	13

Reposition Base	
	10


Block Base	
	14

Bounty	
500 Crowns	

Loot	
Bullvorn Scale (x1)	
Bullvorn Blood (x20)	
Bullvorn Eyes (x10)	
Larva (x10)	
Tusk (x20)	



**Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)**

A species of necrophage that appeared on the Continent after the Conjunction, the bullvorn is a terrible foe, hulking and bearing massive horns. While never encountered with others of their kind, they are often seen in the company of rotflies or nekkers, which they are known to salvage and feed. When encountered in such groups, they are quite dangerous.

When accompanied by other small monsters in combat, the bullvorn sometimes stands behind them, vomiting an artillery of caustic acid over their heads, which is also quite poisonous. Don't block this, or you'll be buying a new shield. Additionally, when accompanied by rotflies, it is known to purposefully detonate its allies using this vomit, sometimes just to watch them explode.

It is capable of a terrible charge which can devastate slower foes. When it decides to charge, it does not care if any of its allies might be in the way. Keep on your toes and be ready to dodge. Whenever possible, fight with your back to a solid obstacle. Baiting the monster into charging into stone creates an opening for you to deal a fatal strike. Speaking of striking the monster, be warned that its wounds regenerate much like a troll, and that its hide will put only the strongest of blades. An application of Necrophage Oil would be prudent.

Attacks						
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect
Claw Slash	14	S	3d6+3	15	—	—
Horn Gore	14	P	5d6	15	—	Blood (50%)

Ability: Caustic Vomit	
By taking an action, a bullvorn can roll with a base 13 against a target within 30m in vomit acidic bile on them. If this target fails to defend, they take 1d6 damage to a random location, are <b>poisoned</b> , and any armor on that location takes 1d10 ablation damage. If the target successfully blocks this attack, the item they used to block it still takes 1d10 ablation damage. This attack cannot be parried, even if the defending target is a Witcher with the Parry Arrows ability.	

Ability: Charge	
If its target is more than 5m away, the bullvorn can take an full round to charge up to them and make a single Horn Gore attack with a base of 12. If the target fails to defend, they take 7d6 damage to the torso and are knocked back 1m. If the target strikes anything while flying back, they take a number of dice of damage to the torso equal to the half the number of meters they flew. If the target successfully blocks this attack, they must make a Physique check (DC:25) to avoid being knocked back as per the ability. If the bullvorn misses its target, it continues to charge the rest of the distance in a straight line. If it hits a wall or an equally solid object, the bullvorn becomes stunned until it can make a Status Save.	

**Bullvorn**

**Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)**

Don't really hear 'bout those some of butcher much. But, guess they spend most of their time underground with the rotflies. Intimidate 'em! (Some folk say once in a blue moon a man gets 't get struck by lightning and all the corpse'll smash together into this bulkin' mound of flesh and bones and whatnot. And once it gets started killin' there's no stoppin' it! Folks, long as you stay outside the cave and deep within and only you'll be fine though. If you do have to fight one, you best keep your wits about ya. Folks who've seen 'em first-hand say the beast can spit acid from all the guts melted up in 'em.

—Rudolf Kaczmarek

—Erland of Larvik



## Statistics

Here you can find the monster's core statistics and derived statistics, including: Health Points, Encumbrance, etc.

## Skills

Here you can find the skill bases for the monster's various skills. When the monster wants to perform an action, find the appropriate skill and add its base to the roll. The Statistic has already been factored into its base.

## Defenses

Here you can find the monster's various defenses and their weaknesses. Top to bottom you can find the monster's:

- **Armor:** An armor value, covering all locations equally.
- **Regeneration:** Represents how many Health Points the monster regenerates at the beginning of its turn.
- **Resistance:** Shows what attack types the monster takes half damage from or is buffered against (See the side bars, Resistance to Stun & Magical Charms).
- **Immunities:** Shows what types of attacks or effects cannot harm or affect the monster.
- **Susceptibilities:** Shows what types of attacks the monster is weak against and takes double damage from or is worse at avoiding.
- **Defense Bases:** Shows you the skill bases for its three primary forms of defense (Dodge, Reposition, & Block).

## Bounty & Loot

Here you can find the average bounty for the monster and the loot you can get from killing the monster. The bounty represents the average amount of money you can get from an employer who sends you to kill the monster. This amount can be lowered if the employer is shorting the players or raised by haggling. The Loot on a monster is assumed to be reasonably easy to remove, but you must roll to see how much of each component you get. The only loot you must roll to attain is the Mutagen (if the monster grants one). To obtain a Mutagen, a character must roll a DC:16 Witcher Training Roll.

## Commoner's Superstition

Here you can find the basic superstitions about the monster. This is what anyone who rolls Education and beats the DC knows. This

information is largely false but does grant some insight.

## Lore & Behavior

Here you can find the true, factual lore about the monster. This information is 100% true and gives you not only a basic concept for how the monster operates but also their standard combat tactics. Like Commoner's Superstition, the players must make a roll to know this information. However, this roll must be made with Monster Knowledge (or Witcher Training). Once this roll has been made successfully, that player is allowed to see not only the Lore & Behavior section but the whole Monster Stat Block.

## Attacks

Here you can find the monster's basic attacks. Each attack is listed with its damage, the type of damage it deals, the reliability of the weapon (See the Side Bar, Claw Reliability), the range of the attack, any effects the attack has, and its rate of fire (symbolizing how many times the monster can use the attack in one round). Each attack is also listed with its Attack Base, which incorporates the appropriate statistic and skill to roll an attack.

## Vulnerability Blocks

Here you can find any special vulnerabilities the monster has. These are more specialized susceptibilities that either require more description or are unique to the monster.

## Ability Block

Here you can find any special abilities the monster has. These abilities are usually active abilities that the monster can use its action (or full turn) to activate. Sometimes, an ability is a passive ability that always applies to the monster, but this is rare.

## Exceptional Monster Lifepath

The exception to this breakdown is the Exceptional Monsters. Exceptional Monsters are extremely rare and are intended to be used as non-player characters in your stories. To that end, both of the Exceptional Monsters have a second spread after their initial statistics where you can find a Lifepath for the monster. This Lifepath will guide you through creating a unique monster to use in your game.

## Blood Transference

Creatures that drink blood from their target are affected by any substances in the blood they drink.

## Effect: Disease

A character that has the **Disease** condition takes a -2 to all actions, lowers its maximum Stamina by one quarter, and must make DC: 14 Endurance checks at the discretion of the Game Master or suffer from the **Nausea** condition. The **Disease** condition can only be removed by having a Doctor roll a Healing Hands check (DC: 15) on the affected character and then that character getting a full night's rest.

## Knock-Down

When affected by the Knock-Down Effect a creature is knocked prone.

## Resistance to Stun

Creatures resistant to Stun never lower their Stun Save value when making a Stun Save.

## Magical Charms

A Resistance or Immunity to Magical Charms encompasses all magic that affects the mind. Resistance grants an extra +3 to resist the magic.







# Necrophages

*It's hard to imagine the realm a necrophage comes from. Where does a rotting, heap of flesh and claws fit into the circle of life? I imagine they were probably scavengers. Lurking creatures preying upon the battlefields and graveyards of more accomplished species. That would explain their repellent behavior on the Continent.*

—Erland of Larvik



Necrophages are disgusting and very dangerous. You shouldn't have too much trouble recognizing them. Often humanoid in form, naked, often cadaver-colored and covered in rotting flesh, with or without skin. In the case of bullvores, they may be covered in small, vestigial hands. Even if you think the corpse-colored individual darting quickly toward you is an inebriated neighbor, you cannot miss the horrendous stench, which by itself may knock you down. Most necrophages smell pungently of rot and make few attempts to mask their smell in any way.

Necrophages like to knock down their opponents and watch them torn apart and eaten alive by a horde of followers like ghouls or drowners. While these creatures eat rotting bodies, most are more than happy to add you to the menu. Some may choose to shred you and bury your remains to allow them to rot and your marrow to spoil, but the more feral often crave warm human flesh. Even if you are able to escape, many necrophages have venom glands, or rot and bits of flesh stuck in their teeth, causing a deathly infection even should you be able to walk away.

Do you feel apprehensive walking by graveyards at night, mass graves, terrible battlefields? That is inborn self-preservation. Necrophages may lurk behind headstones or jump out from underground burrows. Despite appearing rotted or emaciated, they are likely faster than you, and often immune to poisons or blood loss. If they are busy digging up the dead with their long, sharp claws and you do

not enter their graveyard, cave, or ruin, they may let you pass, but then again.... Once a powerful necrophage moves into your village's burial grounds they are virtually impossible to get out.

At one time it looked like necrophages were on their way out, rare and timid, but with warfare raging back and forth over the northern countries, with the resulting plagues and famines, we are building a paradise for necrophages. The number of rotting corpses draws together hordes of necrophages that are not afraid of human retaliation. These days, it is rare to see a battlefield vacant of ghouls or rotfiends. What's worse, these recognize leaders like bullvores and grave hags, creatures that are capable of planning, of leading you into traps where you will be swarmed and torn apart. If your village is faced with such a thing, remember to always kill the leader first and perhaps the rest will flee. Use whatever silver you may have, as well as fire as your defense.

Many people believe that these creatures are lost souls, hanged criminals, children who wandered and were lost, that sort of thing. It's not true. Have no sympathy. Scholars believe that all the necrophages are Post-Conjunction monsters. Like most Post-Conjunction monsters, necrophages can only really be fought efficiently by witchers. They have potions and enchanted weapons that allow them to take on these creatures. When traveling, choose your route carefully and try not to travel at night, especially under the full moon.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Necrophage Encounters

In general, necrophages are a good monster to employ in graveyards and on recent battlefields.

The characters might find a **bullvore** hiding in a cavern system near a village, using **rotfiends** to kidnap villagers and then displaying the villagers' mutilated corpses in its lair like art.

While exploring an ancient elder folk ruin, the characters may find a heavy fog setting in and discover that it has become the home to one or more **foglets**.

Any time the characters are traveling through a recent war zone, they might discover too late that some of the corpses laying the field are **rotfiends** lying in wait!

If you really want to give your players' characters a hard time, they might discover that two **bullvores** are fighting in a territorial feud over a mine, using **rotfiends** as soldiers.



Skill Base	
Athletics	10
Awareness	10
Brawling	14
Courage	15
Endurance	20
Intimidation	14
Physique	20
Resist Coercion	14
Resist Magic	14
Stealth	5
Wilderness Survival	7

<b>Armor</b>	8
<b>Regeneration</b>	4

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Poison, Bleeding	

Susceptibilities	
Necrophage Oil, Moondust Bombs	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	13
<b>Reposition Base</b>	10
<b>Block Base</b>	14

Bounty	
500 Crowns	

Loot	
Bullvore Brain (x1) Bullvore Blood (x2d6) Bullvore Eyes (x1d6/3) Linen (x1d6) Twine (x2d6)	



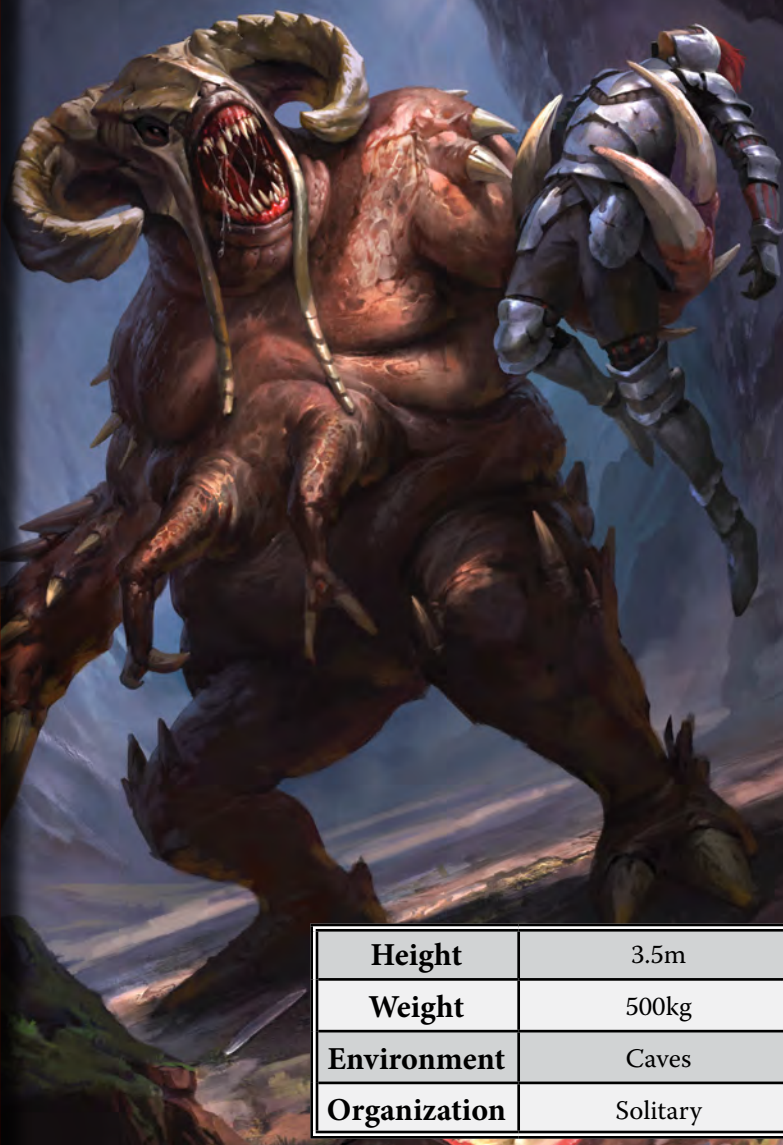
### Medium Complex

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Superior Night Vision*

INT	2
REF	5
DEX	4
BODY	12
SPD	3
EMP	1
CRA	2
WILL	6

STUN	9
RUN	9
LEAP	1
STA	45
ENC	120
REC	9
HP	90



<b>Height</b>	3.5m
<b>Weight</b>	500kg
<b>Environment</b>	Caves
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Bullvore

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

Don't really hear 'bout these sons of bitches much. Heh, guess they spend most of their time underground with the rotfiends. Interestin' beast though! Some folk say once in a blue moon a mass grave'll get struck by lightnin' and all the corpses'll smash together into this hulkin' mound of flesh and limbs and whatnot. And once it gets started killin' there's no stoppin' it! Heh, long as ya stay outta the cave and deep mines and such you'll be fine though. If ya do have to fight one ya best keep your wits about ya. Folks who've seen 'em first-hand say the beast can spit acid from all the guts mashed up in 'em.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

A species of necrophage that appeared on the Continent after the Conjunction, the bullvore is a terrible foe, hulking and bearing massive horns. While never encountered with others of their kind, they are often seen in the company of rotfiends or nek-kers, which they are known to subjugate and bully. When encountered in such groups, they are quite dangerous.

When accompanied by other small monsters in combat, the bullvore sometimes stands behind them, vomiting an artillery of caustic acid over their heads, which is also quite poisonous. Don't block this, or you'll be buying a new shield. Additionally, when accompanied by rotfiends, it is known to purposefully detonate its allies using this vomit, sometimes, just to watch them explode.

It is capable of a terrible charge which can devastate slower foes. When it decides to charge, it does not care if any of its allies might be in the way. Keep on your toes and be ready to dodge. Wherever possible, fight with your back to a solid obstacle. Baiting the monster into charging into stone creates an opening for you to deal a fatal strike. Speaking of striking the monster, be warned that its wounds regenerate much like a troll, and that its hide will part only for the strongest of blades. An application of Necrophage Oil would be prudent.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	14	S	3d6+3	15	—	—	2
Horn Gore	14	P	5d6	15	—	Bleed (50%)	1

### Ability: Caustic Vomit

By taking an action, a bullvore can roll with a base 13 against a target within 8m to vomit acidic bile on them. If this target fails to defend, they take 3d6 damage to a random location, are **poisoned**, and any armor on that location takes 1d10 ablation damage. If the target successfully blocks this attack, the item they used to block it still takes 1d10 ablation damage. This attack cannot be parried, even if the defending target is a Witcher with the Parry Arrows ability.

### Ability: Charge

If its target is more than 5m away, the bullvore can take its full round to charge up to 10m and make a single Horn Gore attack with a base of 12. If the target fails to defend, they take 7d6 damage to the torso and are knocked back 5m. If the target strikes anything while flying back, they take a number of d6s of damage to the torso equal to the half the number of meters they flew. If the target successfully blocks this attack, they must make a Physique check (DC: 25) to avoid being knocked back as noted above. If the bullvore misses its target, it continues to charge the rest of the distance in a straight line. If it hits a wall or an equally solid object, the bullvore becomes **stunned** until it can make a Stun Save.

*“Bullvores are among the most repellent necrophages I’ve encountered in all my years on the Path. Their engorged, tumescent bodies are enough to turn the stomachs of the common people but their twisted minds are far more revolting to me. Bullvores are arrogant creatures that take pleasure in the suffering of others. Often times, they’ll murder their own retinue in elaborate ways just for the spectacle.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	16
Awareness	14
Brawling	12
Courage	12
Endurance	10
Intimidation	13
Physique	9
Resist Magic	14
Stealth	15
Wilderness Survival	12

Armor	0
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Necrophage Oil, Moondust Bombs, Dimeritium Bombs, Yrden	

Dodge Base	15
Reposition Base	16
Block Base	15

Bounty	
800	

Loot	
Foglet Teeth (x1d6/2) Infused Dust (x1d6) Phosphorus (x2d6) Foglet Essence (x1d6)	



**Medium  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	5
REF	8
DEX	8
BODY	7
SPD	6
EMP	3
CRA	3
WILL	6

STUN	6
RUN	18
LEAP	3
STA	30
ENC	70
REC	6
HP	60



Height	2m
Weight	75kg
Environment	Caves & swamps
Organization	Solitary

# Foglet

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

*Foglets? Foglers? Heard both, but I guess it's a dialect! Heh, either way, I've never been lucky enough to see one of these critters. Folk say they haunt the swamps on the banks of the Pontar and the Yaruga but if they do they must make quiet work of it. There's an old wives' tale I heard in Verden. Says the foglets bring the fog and they hide in it! If ya ever see a bank of fog rollin' in at night, set yerself down right where ya stand. Foglet'll make ya see things in the mist. If ya gotta keep movin' the best thing to do's to wash yer eyes with the swamp water. Somethin' about it washes the magic outta yer eyes and lets ya see the foglet fer what it really is!*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

The fog is a danger to travelers, but is nowhere as dangerous as a light within it. The body of a foglet glows softly, luring travelers to their doom: disembowelment at the end of a long and crooked claw.

As long as it lurks inside the fog, the foglet is a threat. It can disappear and create an illusory environment for it to hide its invisible form within, which it can also populate with copies of itself that dissipate upon being struck. Washing your eyes with swamp water does nothing, and is disgusting.

When the foglet finally strikes from invisibility, it becomes visible again for a moment, allowing you to counterattack. Quen is a great tool to protect against this attack if you know it's coming.

If you are able to surprise a foglet, a Dimeritium Bomb will stop it from summoning its fog. If not, preparing Yrden or using Moondust Bombs will render the foglet visible and thus vulnerable. If you are traveling with a Mage or a Priest, they might also dispel the fog, which would rob the foglet of its devious tricks. That would be the perfect timing for treating the monster to a precise application of Necrophage Oil.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	15	S	3d6+2	10	—	—	2

### Ability: Summon Fog

By taking its action, a foglet can summon a wave of fog to fill an area (with a 30m radius) initially centered on the foglet. Anyone (save for the foglet) in this fog is unable to see anything that is farther than 4m from them. By spending an action, the foglet can move the fog 10m. This fog lasts 24 hours or until the foglet uses an action to dismiss. A Mage or Priest can attempt to dispel this fog, by spending 5 STA points and taking an action to roll a Spellcasting check (DC:18). The fog dissipates after the foglet dies. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability but do not dissipate the fog.

### Ability: Invisibility

While within an area of fog, a foglet can take its action to become invisible. This grants the foglet a +10 bonus to Stealth and a +5 bonus to Attack. Even if a target succeeds in their Awareness check to hear the foglet, they still take a -3 to attack and defense against it. After the foglet attacks, it becomes visible again and it cannot become invisible again until its next turn. If the foglet enters the area of an Yrden sign or is hit by a Moondust Bomb it becomes visible and cannot become invisible again until it exits the area of the aforementioned effect. Lastly, if the foglet moves out of the fog, it becomes visible.

### Ability: Illusory Copies

While within an area of fog, a foglet can take its action to summon four illusory copies of itself that look exactly like it. At the beginning of the foglet's turn, each copy moves and takes an action. These copies each act independently, but the foglet decides what actions they take. Defense actions taken against foglet copies count towards the target's total defense actions taken. Even if they hit, illusory copies cannot do damage. The copies have no Hit Points and if they are hit they are destroyed. A character who sees an illusory copy can take an action to make an Awareness check (DC: 16) to see it is a copy.

### Ability: Create Illusions

By taking its full round, a foglet can create a detailed illusion within the bounds of an area of fog. This illusion can be incredibly detailed and show anything the foglet chooses to depict. No matter what is depicted, it is still an illusion and cannot interact with the creatures in the fog. The illusion has no sound, smell, or feel. If a creature in the fog or outside the fog, sees the foglet's illusion they must make an Awareness check (DC:18) to realize it is an illusion. However, if the illusion abruptly appears in their vision, or they interact with the illusion physically, the creature immediately becomes aware of the illusion.



Skill Base	
Athletics	12
Awareness	8
Brawling	10
Courage	13
Endurance	8
Intimidation	10
Physique	8
Resist Magic	9
Stealth	10
Wilderness Survival	10

Armor	0
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Poison, Bleeding	

Susceptibilities	
Necrophage Oil	

Dodge Base	12
Reposition Base	12
Block Base	12

Bounty	
10	

Loot	
Rotfiend Blood (x1d6/2) Rotfiend Liver (x1)	



**Easy  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Superior Night  
Vision*

INT	1
REF	6
DEX	6
BODY	5
SPD	11
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	5

STUN	5
RUN	33
LEAP	6
STA	25
ENC	50
REC	5
HP	25



Height	2m
Weight	80kg
Environment	Caves & battlefields
Organization	Groups of 4 to 6

# Rotfiend

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

If ya've ever passed through a battlefield ya've probably seen these bastards. Ugh, can't stand 'em myself. Folk say rotfiends are corpses that got resurrected by black magic. If ya kill enough people yer bound to get one or two rotfiends. Heh, nobody knows why they come back but some folk think it's cause the person was harborin' all kindsa greed and depravity when they bit it. Heh, either way. If ya got a rotfiend problem ya gotta cut off the breedin' ground. Gotta find all the bodies 'round yer village and burn 'em. If ya don't, more rotfiends'll rise and you'll just be dealin' with more and more! Once ya burn the bodies ya just gotta hunt the livin' ones down. Best to hunt 'em in gangs.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:10)

Rotfiends are not in fact corpses, despite the fact that they look very similar to decomposing bodies, and are often seen in areas with plenty of fresh corpses. They are scavengers, primarily.

When faced with a lack of corpses, they go after the living for food. Rotfiends always hunt in packs, using numbers to overwhelm their prey. They are surprisingly fast, capable of running at the speed of a galloping horse.

Using a silver sword treated with Necrophage Oil, killing a rotfiend is not terribly difficult, except that as they die, they explode messily, which can set off a dangerous and extraordinarily nauseating chain reaction. It takes a strong stomach to kill these things. To stop them from exploding, use fire to kill them, or to at least deal the final blow. If you can't afford a Dahzbog Rune, a torch will do just fine.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	12	S	3d6	10	—	—	1

### Vulnerability: Horrid Smell

Rotfiends exude a terrible smell of death and decay as if they were rotting corpses. Any creature with a sense of smell can smell a rotfiend from 20m away. Any creature with Scent Tracking can smell a rotfiend from 40m away. Initially, this smell alerts creatures that there is a rotten corpse nearby. For anyone familiar with rotfiends, this is a clear sign that there are likely one or more rotfiends in the area.

### Ability: Explosive Death

When killed or lowered to 5 Hit Points or less, by an attack that isn't fire-based, a rotfiend's body starts to rapidly decompose. At the beginning of the rotfiend's next turn it explodes, dealing 2d6 damage to all locations of anyone in melee range of it. Any character affected is also covered in gore which imposes the Horrid Smell Vulnerability on the character and forces them to make a DC:14 Endurance check or be **nauseated** until they wash off the gore. Anyone within melee range can attempt to block with a shield or reposition out of the area but they must beat a DC:15. If another rotfiend is lowered to 5 Hit Points or less by this explosion, it explodes on its next turn.

*“Whenever you’ve killed a creature, make sure to burn the body. While I wouldn’t go so far as to call rotfiends one of the most dangerous monsters on the Continent, they are prevalent and difficult to exterminate once they’ve made their home near a village. They prefer to live underground, which makes it very possible that you may have a rotfiend nest near your village and be completely unaware. Burning your dead may not be smiled upon in your culture but keeping your village safe from further attack until you can deal with the nest is paramount.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# In Cirrus Gloom

## 1029, Near Roggeven Transcribed Aderyn of Spalla

*The thin fog glowed with the light of the half-moon curling through its misty wisps. As Erland moved, it seemed to move. He stopped, it stopped. This was it; his mark. The Witcher smiled. He pulled a vial of Swallow potion and drank the bitter contents. Erland paused and double-checked his gear: potions ready, hunting knife sharp, one sword at his back, and one in hand. He flexed his fingers, preparing to cast the sign of Yrden at a moment's notice. The brume suddenly thickened... too quickly. The surrounding glow started to distinguish itself into two forms. It nearly blinded the Witcher to anything beyond its wall of white. The wooded swamp that had only a moment before been ablaze with night songs and ardent frogs sounded muffled and unnatural. It was as if this fog was crawling into his head. He could see how those not trained in the Witcher's way could fall prey to this confusion; but for him, he easily separated magic from reality. Erland's Gryphon Medallion began to shake and rattle against his armor. He sensed more than one monster close. Foglets: necrophages that lured victims into a deep magical fog, never to be seen again. As the two areas of light collected into distinct brightness, he cast the sign of Aard at the closer shape. A wave of magical force shot through his body to his hand and from his hand through the air. The force hit the shape, tearing it from its cloak of fog and sending it sprawling into the dank water off the bank. As the foglet splashed into the briny water, Erland pushed himself, summoning the sign of Yrden for protection. Glowing purple sigils burned themselves into the ground, surrounding the Witcher with a slowly churning light. The second light in the mist darted towards Erland. Its form became visible as it swung a razor-sharp talon at the Witcher. Erland ducked low under the claw feeling the water splash behind him as the foglet he had struck moved towards him cautiously.*

*Without turning, the hunter thrust his hand into the gnarled creature in front of him and blasted it back with a wave of heightened energy. Spinning quickly, Erland swung his sword at the foglet approaching from behind. The blade sliced into the bloody, half-rotted flesh. It vanished once again. Erland jumped onto a log and, spinning in a great leap, drove his sword down into the first foglet. Bits of sickly tissue burst from its hollow gut, bones splintering. The creature leapt up at the Witcher, its long, spindly legs like a spring. Erland side-stepped the wicked claw slashing for his face and punched it with his free hand. The monster rammed face-first into a low tree branch. In a puff of nebulous fog, it disappeared, finally out of the Yrden's grasp. The swamp was beyond silent. The fog so muffled sound that it silenced even the tenor of his own breath. He felt it, one of the creatures appeared behind him. He rolled and turned, but it was already gone. He felt his boots hit water and mud and he moved back to the shore.*

*In an instant, both foglets flanked him out of the mist. They lashed out with their elongated arms, claws slashing wildly. Erland quickly turned his body letting the blows land on his armor. Still, they knocked his breath from him as they pounced on him. Erland could feel blood flowing from wounds on his arms and a sharp pain shot through his chest. The foglets began to slow as the light of the Yrden circle bathed them. The Witcher could see them trying to disappear but their retreat was slow and labored. All at once, Erland swung and slashed one with his silver sword while drawing and cleaving into the second with his steel. He glimpsed a face, its wide, watery eyes leering at him. The beasts were gone again. The Swallow potion was working. The pain from his wounds began to subside as his breath started returning to normal. Out of the corner of his eye, Erland saw a wisp of concentrated fog. He lunged, crisscrossing both swords downward. They found bone and flesh, sinking deeply into the shoulders of the foglet. The creature's head lolled, the skin gaping in a bloody yawn. Still, the thing slashed desperately. The Witcher slid his sword into the throat of the creature and twisted. Its spine snapped with a wet pop. The monster went limp and dropped to the ground, lifeless.*

*As the Yrden circle faded, a low, whispery growl was in his ear. The second foglet appeared nearly on top of him. Erland swung his silver sword with all his might. The creature was already gone. The Witcher shook his head and resheathed the steel before scanning the heavy fog once again.*

*Four foglets appeared in front of Erland, theirs claws already lashing toward his face. He raised his sword while stepping back. The claws melted into fog as they struck his blade, the whole horde fading away into the gloom. Moments later, Erland felt a powerful claw rake along his back, tearing into his armor. Erland turned toward the foglet behind him, seeing its form already starting to fade. He concentrated, cast the sign of Aard, and blasted the foglet from its shroud; it landed hard on the swampy ground. The Witcher was on it, slashing into the creature's face as it tried to rise. Wiping his blade on a cloth, Erland watched the unnatural fog clear. The frogs awoke, the water dripped, and the night began to sing again. Erland returned to the Inn to meet the widow who had hired him. He handed Lady Ejdrrik a bag with the heads of the foglets inside. "Do not look my lady. These are your monsters."*

*She nodded, "Thank you... would you like to join me for breakfast and...?" She had a bag for him too. It jingled as she handed it to him.*

*"I..." he didn't look inside but placed it into his satchel absently.*

*Erland felt the townspeople eyeing him suspiciously, their voices hushed and apprehensive, "No, my lady. I thank you but the road calls."*







# Specters

*Specters are one of the few monsters most peasants are usually right about. They truly are spirits; they do indeed come from pain and death. Mages have tried to explain it with their magical theories, but it's as simple as a soul bound to the earth. Unable to move on until it gets what it needs, or it's put to rest by a silver sword.*

—Erland of Larvik



If there is one thing to be learned from the study of spectral beings, it is that we all need to settle our grievances before we pass. You thought necrophages were the unquiet dead, but they turned out to be Post-Conjunction monsters. No, specters are truly the unquiet dead. They are ghostly spirits who appear to be caught between one world and the next, held here by sorrow, fury, and the need for revenge. The most powerful are usually female spirits wronged at important moments in their lives. Some are capable of summoning hosts of other spirits and even corporeal threats, making them far too deadly for your average soldier. They are immune to pain, and since most are incorporeal, they are largely unharmed by steel and do not bleed. The only time most become material is just in the brief moment they attack you. Some can create copies of themselves to dance around the victim and suck away their life force.

Because they are ghostly, you probably assume that you are safe when the sun rises, but no, there are many classes of specters that appear in the daylight and at least one that prefers the sunlight. While some appear in the same places you find necrophages: graveyards, battlefield, sites of torture and execution; many are tied to a thing or a place that caused their continuing pain. A number are found in rural settings. If the wheat in the field waves when there is no wind, you are in trouble. Like some necrophages, specters do not seem to appreciate being watched.

There are very few ways to banish specters. Many of them believe themselves to be part of an ongoing story and you must understand the story in order to do anything. Are they looking for a cheating lover who may or may not still be alive? Did someone kill them to take their land and their wife? Did they die a long, lingering death alone? If you uncover the story, you may be able to solve their problem and lay them to rest but it's dangerous because they may suck away your life force so that you join them. In the end it is probably best to find a witcher. They do not share their secrets willingly, but I have heard stories. They have ways to make the specters material so they can be fought.

We use the term undead easily, but we know less than we think. Many religions believe in a happy afterlife where you live in a way deserved by your good acts or hard work. Do specters fight with all their will not to move on to this place? Are they damned to another place because of their anger, sadness, and desire for revenge? Can we solve their problems, sending them on to a happy ending? Are they lost souls or simply persons with unfinished business? As far as I know there are no dwarven or elven specters. There are definitely elves and dwarves who do not go to their end peacefully. Do they go somewhere else from which they cannot return, or do non-human specters only haunt lands like Dol Blathanna or Mahakam?

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Specter Encounters

Generally, specters are excellent monsters to use when you have a curse afoot or violent crimes.

The characters might be hired to save a person from **barghest**, only to find out that their charge did something horrible to incur its wrath.

A **hym** manifests wherever someone is feeling true, gnawing guilt. The characters could encounter a knight who has committed terrible war crimes at the behest of their king and is now plagued by a **hym**.

The characters could run across the laboratory of a renegade sorcerer or sorceress who was engineering a new sickness. Perhaps one of their servants died of this plague and is now a **pesta**, threatening to spread a totally new plague.

If you want to really bring out the roleplaying in your group, you could have a **hym** attach itself to a character who has done something terrible and feels guilty about it.



Skill Base	
Athletics	12
Awareness	12
Brawling	12
Courage	—
Endurance	10
Intimidation	11
Physique	7
Resist Magic	13
Stealth	13
Wilderness Survival	14

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Poison, Fire, Fear, Disease	

Susceptibilities	
Specter Oil, Moondust Bombs, Yrden	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	11
<b>Reposition Base</b>	13
<b>Block Base</b>	12

Bounty	
30	

Loot	
Barghest Essence (x1d6) Infused Dust (x1d6/2)	



**Easy  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision  
Scent Tracking*

INT	1
REF	5
DEX	7
BODY	5
SPD	8
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	5

STUN	5
RUN	24
LEAP	4
STA	25
ENC	50
REC	5
HP	25

<b>Height</b>	1m
<b>Weight</b>	40kg
<b>Environment</b>	Near settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Packs of 3 to 5

# Barghest

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

Some folk say barghest are the hounds of the Wild Hunt and that they used to be regular dogs that got transformed by some curse. Priests'll have ya believe they're divine retribution, sent down by the gods to tear apart sinners. Don't really know which is true. Heh, all I do know is they come in packs and ya better have some sturdy armor, cause if their jaws don't bring ya down they'll douse ya in fire and burn ya alive. Had the pleasure of seein' a pack of these things run down some poor bastard down near Brugge. Tried to put a bolt or two into 'em as I kept on my way but they're damned agile and hell if I was gonna stick around to see 'em up close!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

Contrary to popular belief, a barghest is not a form of divine retribution that seeks out sinners to punish during the Wild Hunt.

Truthfully, they are created in a manner similar to any curse, by the concentration of ill will, and have no connection to the Wild Hunt. While some barghests are rather direct in their pursuit of a single cursed entity, others are not so inclined, having been created as more of a side-effect of a curse.

In combat, barghests fight in packs, where their agility allows them to surround their opponents easily. This, combined with their nasty habit of spitting green fire makes them a dangerous monster. Occasionally, a barghest turns semi-transparent and glows brightly. This is your opportunity to dodge, as this is the sign that they will attempt a spectral charge, which can leave you blind if you fail to react in time.

An ample supply of Moondust Bombs or a well placed Yrden circle can slow down their spectral charge, and nothing helps put them down faster than a healthy application of Specter Oil.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	12	P	2d6	15	—	—	1

### Ability: Spectral Charge

By taking its full turn, a barghest can charge up to 8 meters and phase through a single target in its path. The barghest makes an Athletics check and the target must either dodge or reposition to defend. If the target fails to defend, they take no damage but they are **blinded** until the end of their next turn. If the barghest's spectral charge would take them into the area of an Yrden circle or a Moondust Bomb they cannot use their spectral charge.

### Ability: Hellfire Breath

By taking its full turn, a barghest can shoot a spout of green fire from its mouth at a target in melee range. The barghest makes an attack at a base of 12 and if the target fails to defend, they take 3d6 damage to a random location, and have a 50% chance of lighting on **fire**. This attack cannot cause critical wounds.

*“While barghest will sometimes manifest themselves—primarily through a place of great suffering—many are summoned by a person in a moment of great pain. I still remember a hunt in Cidaris a few centuries or so ago that illustrated that point quite well. I was hired to protect a knight from a pack of barghest that routinely hounded him and his estate in the night. I was a younger witcher and set about the task without much investigation. I killed the specters but in the process discovered the source of the barghest: one of the knight’s servants, beaten to death and left in the forest. One must always be careful when hunting barghest.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	17
Awareness	17
Brawling	16
Courage	18
Endurance	—
Intimidation	17
Persuasion	17
Physique	15
Resist Coercion	18
Resist Magic	17
Stealth	18
Wilderness Survival	14

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	5

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Bleeding, Freeze, Poison, Knock-Down, Disease	

Susceptibilities	
Specter Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	16
<b>Reposition Base</b>	17
<b>Block Base</b>	16

Bounty	
1500	

Loot	
Veles Runestone (x1) Specter Dust (x1d6) Essence of Wraith (x2d6) Crystallized Essence (x1d6/2) Emerald Dust (x1d6/2)	



### Hard Difficult

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Superior Night Vision*

INT	7
REF	5
DEX	4
BODY	7
SPD	5
EMP	3
CRA	1
WILL	12

STUN	9
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	45
ENC	70
REC	9
HP	90



<b>Height</b>	3m
<b>Weight</b>	Weightless
<b>Environment</b>	Around their prey
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Hym

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:20)

Can't say I know anythin' about anythin' called a hym. Heard rumors hear and there 'bout shadows and specters of guilt and whatnot. Sounds like this thing. Heh, once talked with a raider from An Skelig over a few pints. Poor bastard was half mad and had a mind to talk why he was in dock. Said he saw shadows of an old shield brother he sailed with. Their ship went down off the coast of Nazair and the lad had to leave his mate to drown. Ever since, he'd been having nightmares and visions. Heh, I saw a lot of that durin' the first war, so I figured he was just shaken. Said the only thing that kept him sane was fightin': Feelin' the adrenaline and the pain.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:18)

While classified as a specter, the hym is actually a demon, which resides in the outer spheres. It comes into our world to feed on negative emotions, mainly guilt, by latching onto particularly despicable individuals. A hym torments its host by showing them hallucinations while they are awake and nightmares while they sleep. It is also known to coerce its host to retreat into solitude and hurt themselves or otherwise lash out, making them suffer greatly until they either inevitably commit suicide, the hym finds a new, even guiltier host, or the host's body expires under the stress.

The hym fluidly moves through shadows and is invisible when among them, as it too is a shadow. It tends to remain nearby its host, but only because it needs to feed. There is only one surefire way to summon one. Find its host, and keep them in a room that you've totally illuminated and soothe them, so as to starve the hym. This enrages the beast, causing it to show itself.

So long as the hym is illuminated, it is tangible and can be harmed. Igniting the hym ensures this. By now, its claws will be your only fear, which is warranted. Come prepared with Specter Oil and you might survive.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	16	S	5d6	—	—	Long Reach, Shadow Claws	2

### Vulnerability: Flaming Attacks

If a target tries to strike a hym with a flaming weapon or a fire-based attack, the benefits of the hym's Shadow Body ability are negated until the end of the round. If the hym can move away from the source of light before the end of the round, its Shadow Body ability resumes at the end of its turn.

### Ability: Shadow Claws

A hym's claws drain the life force of any target it successfully strikes, meaning that even if the hym's Claw Slash fails to penetrate a target's armor, that target still takes 2d6 damage which is not modified by armor or location.

### Ability: Coerce Prey

A hym can use any of the following abilities on a target within 10 meters. First, by taking its action, the hym can whisper in the ear of its prey to try to coerce them. If the target fails to beat the hym's Persuasion check with their Resist Coercion check the hym can make them do one of three things: Attack themselves once with the nearest weapon, attack someone near them once with the nearest weapon, or retreat to solitude and refuse company. If coerced into retreating to solitude, the target does their best to stay alone for 1d10 hours, going as far as to lock doors, run away, or threaten people who follow them.

Secondarily, a hym can take its action to conjure shadowy hallucinations of their prey's guilt. If the target fails to beat the hym's Spellcasting check with their Resist Coercion check they become panicked and take a -3 to resist the hym's coercion for 1 hour.

Finally, a hym can take its full round to weave vivid, life-like nightmares into the mind of their sleeping target. This causes the target to regain no Hit Points or Stamina from sleeping and reduces their maximum Stamina to half until they can get sleep. The halving of Stamina is cumulative but it cannot lower the target's Stamina below 5.

### Ability: Shadow Body

A hym's body is composed of magically bound shadows, giving it a number of benefits.

Most importantly, this means that a hym can usually only be perceived by sight. If a character is blinded, they cannot perceive the hym at all until the moment it attacks or makes a noise due to taking damage. If the hym is in darkness, it becomes **incorporeal** and invisible meaning that no one can perceive it and it cannot be damaged by physical attacks. Unlike other invisible monsters, the hym cannot be smelled or heard so it gains a +10 to attack and characters cannot roll Awareness against it. A Mage can use their action to roll a Magic Training check against the hym's Stealth check to determine where it is and lower the hym's bonus to attack to +5. This also allows them to target the hym. However, as soon as the hym moves they must find it again.

Secondarily, the hym can use its move action to teleport from one area of shadow to another within 10m if they are in darkness or dim light. The hym can pass through anything that doesn't break line-of-sight and if it passes through a trap or a spell's area, it is unaffected. Yrden does not end this ability.



Skill Base	
Athletics	14
Awareness	9
Brawling	10
Courage	—
Endurance	—
Intimidation	14
Physique	10
Resist Coercion	—
Resist Magic	15
Stealth	11
Wilderness Survival	8

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Incorporeal, Bleed, Poison, Fear, Coercion, Disease	

Susceptibilities	
Specter Oil, Moondust Bombs, Yrden	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	18
<b>Reposition Base</b>	16
<b>Block Base</b>	16

Bounty	
900	

Loot	
Specter Dust (x1d6)	
Crystallized Essence (x1d6/2)	
Glyph of Yrden (x1)	
Essence of Wraith (x2d6)	



**Hard  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	5
REF	8
DEX	6
BODY	7
SPD	7
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	9

STUN	8
RUN	21
LEAP	4
STA	40
ENC	70
REC	8
HP	80



<b>Height</b>	1.75m
<b>Weight</b>	Weightless
<b>Environment</b>	Near settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Pesta

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

Plague's a touchy subject for me.... Heh, ya see, I spent a good deal of my life in the Temerian military and we saw our fair share of catriona victims. Ugh.... Ya ever seen a catriona patient? The swellin', the rottin' flesh, the pain in their eyes. Enough to make ya wash yerself every night for a year. Pesta are plague bringers. Where ever they go, they bring plagued rats and insects that'll bite anythin' they come in contact with. Ya get bit and thats the end of ya. First ya start breakin' out in boils and next thing ya know yer vomitin' blood and too weak to stand. The only way to fight a pesta's by hirin' a witcher. Far as I know they're the only ones with the tools to kill 'em.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

Pesta, also known as plague maidens, are a rare form of specter that appear in lands ravaged by disease. Information about them is scarce, because most survivors tend to die shortly thereafter from illness.

A pesta, like most specters, is incorporeal, which makes it impossible to fight without access to Yrden or a plentiful supply of Moondust Bombs.

Pesta travel inside a cloud of disease carrying flies and are trailed by hordes of plague rats that they control. A pesta's claws drip with disease, as do these flies and rats, making fighting these specters a disease-riddling experience. Thankfully, witchers are immune to the diseases they carry.

Combat against a pesta boils down to a careful application of Specter Oil served on a silver blade, and Yrden. Burn away the cloud of insects surrounding her and keep close to the specter so you will be able to re-apply Yrden as needed. Any allies you have brought should focus on the hordes of rats, which must be dealt with as the fight progresses, lest you all drown.

After the hunt, make sure any companions you bring with you have quick access to a doctor. They will surely leave the battle weak and sickly.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	16	S	4d6	10	—	Disease (50%)	2

Ability: Aura of Flies
A pesta begins combat surrounded by an aura of disease-carrying flies. At the beginning of every character's turn, if they are in melee range of the pesta, they take a -2 to all actions and have a 25% chance of getting the <b>Disease</b> condition. If the pesta is hit with a fire-based attack or a wind-based spell, the aura of flies is scattered until the plague maiden spends an action to re-summon the flies.

Ability: Summon Plagued Rats
A pesta begins combat with two hordes of plagued rats. At the beginning of the pesta's turn, each round, any existent horde of rats will move towards the closest creature and (if possible) attempt to attack them. If a horde of rats is already engaged in combat and doesn't have to move to engage an enemy it will only attack. By taking it's action, a pesta can summon two hordes of plagued rats next to it. These hordes immediately move towards the closest enemy and (if possible) attempts to attack.

Horde of Plagued Rats	
Hit Points: 10	Dodge Base: 16
SPEED: 5	Attack Base: 14
The horde of rats makes an attack against their target, attempting to engulf them and bite them. The target of this attack must make a Dodge/Escape check or Reposition attempt to defend against this attack. If the Horde of Rats succeeds, the target takes 2d6 damage to all body locations and has a 50% chance of contracting the <b>Disease</b> condition.	

*“A pesta is a wraith that must be killed quickly. A noonwraith or a pen-netant may cause a great deal of harm to a certain individual or a small community but a pesta could bring about a plague that ravages an entire country if it is allowed to live for too long. Do not waste time when hunting a pesta.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# Among Corpses

1171, Gors Velen

Transcribed by Leopold of Attre

*"Stay behind the barrier and only fire if you see it coming towards you," Erland called back to Vaz as he leapt down from the makeshift wall of crates and carts at the outskirts of the market square "I can afford to get covered in filth and rats. I can't afford to lose one of Kaer y Seren's teachers."*

*Vaz snorted, notching a silver arrow on his great bow. "Try not to die, Gryphon. I'll keep this lot safe."*

*The market square was still as Erland stepped over the swollen bodies of villagers and merchants. The crunch of his boots on the cobblestone echoed across the empty square almost obscuring a quiet whimpering issuing from a nearby tent. As Erland stepped closer, the rattle of his medallion grew louder against his breastplate: the creature was in the tent. Moments later, a cry shattered the silence. Two young women burst from the tent, stumbling out onto the street, gagging and screaming. Not far behind them, came the pesta. Robed in buzzing flies, the specter slunk through the tent's flaps like a mist, a trail of rats scurrying behind it like the train of a macabre dress.*

*"Get to shelter." Erland commanded, placing himself between the peasants and the shifting wraith, and swiftly drawing the rune-etched silver sword from the scabbard on his back. This wouldn't be an easy fight. His witcher physiology would keep him safe from the pesta's disease and pestilence but he would still have to stay on his toes: its claws could prove deadly enough.*

*With a screech, the plague maiden lunged forward, rot-ted claws swiping for Erland's face, missing by only a few inches as he leapt back. Just as Erland's feet hit the cobbles, the hordes of rats surged forward as a terrible wave. A quick step to the left cleared Erland of the first horde but the second was upon him before he could react, crawling onto his boots and biting at his legs ravenously. Erland grimaced, ignoring the pain in his legs and throwing a hand down to summon the sign of Yrden. As a purple glow began to shine from below, the Witcher quickly shifted out of the way of the plague maiden's grasp and brought his sword down across its back with all his strength. The pesta writhed, now tangible flesh splitting open and letting loose a flow of congealed blood. Erland could feel the impact through the hilt of his sword.*

*Flitting out of the Yrden circle momentarily, the plague maiden swirled at Erland again, one claw tearing into his gut with a screech of splitting mail and plate. The monster hunter cursed, surrounded now by the droning of thousands of flies and still painfully aware of the rats crawling up his legs and gnawing at his armor. Erland channeled power again, casting his hand down and sending a wave of force spiraling out from beneath him. As the flies and rats went tumbling through the air, Erland quickly gripped the hilt of his sword, slashing deftly through the plague maiden's chest. As long as the wraith had to come to him, he could keep it in the influence of his Yrden.*

*The pesta gave a sickening cry, floating quickly backwards out of the circle and raising its claws to the sky. Erland's eyes darted across the market square to see more hordes of rats pouring from open stalls and buildings. The plague maiden had obviously realized its mistake. But its rats weren't enough to kill Erland—not for quite some time—they could keep him busy though. As Erland dodged the hordes of rats, he saw the pesta sailing towards the peasants Erland had commanded, who cowered behind a cart, retching and wheezing. The two of them would be easy fodder for the specter.*

*Erland took a deep breath, ignoring the musky decay-ridden air and leapt towards the plague maiden. It wouldn't be easy to trap the creature in an Yrden sign and still get a clean shot, but he couldn't risk the pest surviving his onslaught. As Erland landed just behind the plague maiden, he slapped his palm to the ground, feeling the buzz of magic course through him. The pesta whirled around in time to see the Witcher slashing his silver blade into its arm, knocking its claw away before making a hurried but powerful cleave. To Erland's relief, the blade caught the pesta in the neck, slicing its desiccated head from its shoulders.*

*As the body of the pesta burned away, Erland stopped to catch his breath, looking to the two young humans cowering in front of him. Their faces were pale and a hundred tiny streams of blood trickled from wounds peppering their exposed flesh. The younger of the two started retching as Erland watched, clutching at her chest. The Witcher grimaced as he sheathed his sword. The rats had already started to scurry back into the sewers, the flies already dispersed to feed on the corpses of the fallen villagers. The stalls and the bodies would be burned, and the plague doctors would be through to study the remnants of the plague. But the illness had already taken hold in these two. They wouldn't last long. Maybe if they were nobility, they could pay a troupe of physicians to work day and night on a cure or soothe their symptoms until the plague passed. But that wasn't the case and Erland knew it.*

*The Witcher winced as the adrenaline wore off and the pain of the gash in his stomach began to burn. He unlatched the pouch at the back of his belt, retrieving the bottle of Swallow potion. For a moment he paused, eyes drifting to the women still huddled by the cart. With furrowed brows, the witcher placed the bottle of pale blue liquid on the ground before them, catching the older woman's eye. "I don't know if this will help you. It's a healing tonic. It was designed for my kind, but there is a chance it may work on you and your friend. If it doesn't work, at least it will give you both a quick passage."*

*Without another word, the Witcher stood, turning to return to the blockade where Vaz was waiting. Behind him he could hear shaking hands fumbling with a cork.*







# Beasts

*Most witchers don't hunt beasts often. Why waste the skills of a trained monster hunter to kill a boar? But I've seen bears that cause more destruction than a horde of rotfiends ever could. People forget that the beasts that didn't come through the Conjunction can be just as deadly as the specters and draconids that did.*

—Erland of Larvik



Everyone forgets the beasts who were the most dangerous things in the forest before the Conjunction. Witchers are busy with endrega and rotfiends. But woodcutters and shepherds still have to deal with wolves and bears, wild cats, and forest boars. Our native carnivores are now most often found in deep woods and in the mountains where they have retreated in the face of Post-Conjunction monsters; but cold weather drives them closer to human habitation and livestock. They're not interested in competing with a pack of necrophages over the corpses left by battles and epidemics. They're more interested in your flocks and herds. Some are stealthy and quiet, and you may find yourself surrounded before you know it. Some are just as big and powerful as the Post-Conjunction monsters. Remember, a creature doesn't have to have magic if it can fit your head in its mouth. It is best to make noise as you walk through the forest, as any of our most dangerous predators will let you be if you don't surprise them. Of course, some are easily controlled by the more intelligent Post-Conjunction monsters like werewolves and leshen, so disregard them at your peril.

Humans may fear our native predators, but they also admire them. Many have them as totems or symbols of their houses. Witchers, in naming their schools certainly have shown great respect to native beasts. In some regions of Skellige, Skelligers who see the twilight of their life coming may go into the forest to hunt bears armed only with a knife, allowing the titanic beasts to give them a worthy passing into the afterlife, and it is readily acknowl-

edged that going into the forest armed solely with a boar spear to hunt the big old boars who haunt the dark places is as dangerous a pastime as any. They are not carnivores, but they are possessed of razor-sharp tusks, huge size, and surly attitudes. It is only a well-trained horse that will stand in its path.

Many native beasts are now found in the most undisturbed areas like the high peaks of the Kestrel Mountains and the deep forests of Kaedwen. In Skellige, there is much hunting of native predators; but without them, the unique culture there would be incomplete. The druids will probably make sure there will always be a place for them and as the population of the Continent is decimated, we may see a resurgence of our native fauna shepherded by the hierophants and flaminica of the world's druid circles. I have found that while most villagers and townsfolk think of these creatures as only vicious threats, the druids are keenly aware of the beasts' true places in the hierarchy of the natural world. We don't know the fate of our native creatures in the South, but as the armies of Nilfgaard "civilize" their recently acquired provinces I think we can assume that there is a wave of eradication facing the panthers, bears, wolves, and other creatures under the banner of the great sun. The exception is Toussaint, where the druids are under the protection of the Duchess Anna Henrietta.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Beast Encounters

Despite being the most mundane of the monsters, beasts are excellent for simple encounters in the wilderness.

**Bears** are highly territorial, and the characters could take shelter in a cave during a storm and discover it was a bear cave.

Or perhaps the characters are captured by Nilfgaardians and sentenced to fight in an arena against a raging **bear**.

In some places in Skellige, **boars** are trained as battlefield pets. The characters could encounter a Skellige raiding party who uses vicious battle **boar**.

Alternatively, the characters could be tasked with hunting a **boar** for a feast and find more trouble than they expected.

**Panthers** are excellent ambush predators so having one (or a pair) stalking the characters as they traverse a dark forest is perfect.

Alternatively, the characters might have to deal with a mage or a noble who keeps a pair of **panthers** as pets. Now the players have to deal with this enemy NPC, as well as a pair of stealthy killers.



Skill Base	
Athletics	10
Awareness	10
Brawling	13
Courage	14
Endurance	16
Intimidation	14
Physique	20
Resist Magic	13
Stealth	8
Wilderness Survival	12

<b>Armor</b>	10
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Bludgeoning	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Beast Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	13
<b>Reposition Base</b>	10
<b>Block Base</b>	15

Bounty	
450	

Loot	
Bear Fat (x1d6)	
Bear Hide (x1d6/2)	
Raw Meat (x3d6)	
Beast Bones (x2d6)	



**Medium  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision  
Scent Tracking*

INT	1
REF	7
DEX	6
BODY	12
SPD	7
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	5

STUN	8
RUN	21
LEAP	4
STA	40
ENC	120
REC	8
HP	80

<b>Height</b>	1.75m
<b>Weight</b>	600kg
<b>Environment</b>	Forests
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or in pairs

# Bear

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:8)

*Ya hear all about these big gnarly monsters with their fire breath and their magic hypnosis and their invisibility and whatnot and ya tend to forget about nature's own ploughin' murder machines. Heh, I've been in a wagon that got attacked by a bear. Heh, yeah, there I am mindin' my business in the back of the wagon and suddenly the whole thing rocks like it just got hit by a ploughin' trebuchet! Won't go into exhaustive detail on that little scuffle. Let's say, I gave it a few bolts from my trusty crossbow and when that didn't do much I decided to make a tactical retreat. Heh, some of the others on the wagon weren't so lucky.... If a bear rears up, run for yer life.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Education DC:12)

Bears kill more people every year than most monsters. A bite from a wyvern is more survivable than a bite from a bear. Where a were-wolf's claws can be parried, a bear's claws can not, and the bear will still be trying to kill you when the sun comes up in the morning. While many scholars on the Continent would classify the bear as a beast instead of a monster, I believe that the bear would disagree. Reality demands it's inclusion into their monstrous ranks.

Carry Beast Oil on you at all times and you might survive your fight. When blocking the heavy swipes of a bear, a shield will do not much-except snap. Instead, try and reposition yourself out of reach of its arms whenever possible. While this won't tire out the bear, this will hopefully keep you from being torn apart by the bear's sharp teeth during a horrifically one-sided grapple. If you ever have to look up at a bear rearing up at you on its back two legs, you've already made a fatal mistake.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	15	P	8d6	15	—	Crushing Force, Bleed (75%)	1
Claw Slash	15	S	4d6+5	15	—	Crushing Force	2

### Ability: Rearing Strike

By taking its full round, a bear can rear up onto its hind legs and bring down both claws on a target in melee range, using an attack base of 12. If this attack hits, the target takes 6d6 damage to their torso, is knocked **prone**, and pinned by the bear. If the target tries to block this attack, they can negate the damage but they are still knocked **prone** and pinned unless they can beat the bear's Physique check with their own Physique roll. If they do manage to succeed, the target is able to throw off the bear and is unaffected by any part of the Rearing Strike ability.

### Alternate Form: Great Bear

Deep in the forests of the Continent and the islands of Skellige, bears grow larger and more fearsome than the already terrifying masses of muscle that stalk the woods. These great bears are violent and extremely territorial. Oftentimes, they have to battle Post-Conjunction monsters to secure their territory.

These great bears have an improved armor Stopping Power of 14 and resistance to Piercing and Slashing attacks as well as Bludgeoning attacks. Finally, a great bear's attacks have an attack base of 17, except Rearing Strike which has a base of 14.

*“The last bear I fought was a mean old lump of muscle and fur the local villagers had taken to calling ‘Bone-Snapper’. It was a great bear from the outskirts of the Brokilon. The villagers had plenty of stories about it. They said it was enchanted by the Dryads, it had once been a human who was cursed by a nixie, it was some form of monster crossbreed. Of course, none of these stories turned out to be true. Just a overgrown bear with a bad temper and years of experience. Still, the fight was tough and I dare say If I were a bit slower I might not have been the victor.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	8
Awareness	7
Brawling	6
Courage	16
Endurance	13
Intimidation	10
Physique	12
Resist Magic	8
Stealth	10
Wilderness Survival	9

Armor	5
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Beast Oil	

Dodge Base	10
Reposition Base	8
Block Base	11

Bounty	
10	

Loot	
Boar Tusks (x1d6/3)	
Boar Pelt (x1d6/3)	
Raw Meat (x1d6)	



**Easy  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Scent Tracking*

INT	1
REF	5
DEX	4
BODY	8
SPD	5
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	6

STUN	7
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	35
ENC	80
REC	7
HP	35



Height	1m
Weight	90kg
Environment	Forests & plains
Organization	Groups of 2 to 6

# Boar

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:8)

Always felt a kindred spirit in a wild boar! Heh, sturdy, short, down right mean-spirited if they wake up on the wrong side of bed! Spent a bit of time huntin' boar in the Mahakams and I can tell yas they're not to be trifled with. If they get chargin' yer best options to jump fer cover cause their tusks'll tear through a brigandine if ya give 'em the chance. Heh, now don't quote me on this but I hear some folk in the south think boar's are good luck. Think it was down in Gemmera where they say if ya can wrestle a boar to the ground and rub it's snout you'll have good luck and yer next child's sure to be a strappin' healthy son with the tenacity of a boar!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Education DC:12)

A boar is a beast of stubborn temperament. Hunting one is dangerous, but rewarding. A single boar can feed you and your friends for a good few happy days if you hunt an average-sized adult.

On your hunt, carry a spear. It will keep you further away from danger, which is ideal. Beast Oil can also help if you are hunting alone, but you shouldn't need it if you've got enough people with you. Be warned that a boar can break off an unsuccessful charge quickly and make another attempt. Always stay on your toes, and remember to keep your distance.

Boar are extremely territorial creatures and thus you may find yourself facing down four to six of them if you stray too deeply into the wilderness. Their intensely aggressive nature means they will continue to pursue you until you are far out of their territory and are unlikely to give up the fight after being wounded.

In the kitchen, make sure none of the delicious meat goes to waste. You can braise the boar in wine or ale, or make a roast with carrots, onions, and garlic. A stew is also an attractive option. Smoke, salt, or pickle what you will not eat immediately to maximize your well-deserved reward.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Tusk Gore	11	P	3d6	15	—	Bleeding (30%)	1

### Ability: Rebounding Charge

If its target is more than 6m away, a boar can take its full round, to move up to 15m and make a single Tusk Gore attack at an attack base of 9 which does 5d6 damage instead of 3d6. After dealing damage, the boar moves the rest of its movement in any direction it chooses, including backwards or forwards through the target's space. If the boar misses the attack, it continues to move the rest of the distance and can change its trajectory. The boar cannot, however, attack another target on its trajectory.

### Alternate Form: War Boar

Some groups, especially in Skellige, have a fondness for trained war boars. These war beasts are picked from the largest and strongest boars and trained to be lethal killing machines. On the battlefield they are often deployed to disrupt enemy ranks and weaken enemy morale. These war boars have an improved armor Stopping Power of 10. Additionally, their Tusk Gore attack deals 4d6 damage and their Rebounding Charge Ability deals 5d6 damage. These attacks have an attack base of 15.

*“War boars are an age-old tradition in Skellige. I vaguely remember seeing one when I was a young boy. I was shocked that a boar could stand taller than me. Perhaps not a staggering fact considering I doubt I was much taller than a meter tall. To this day, I’ve only seen a war boar in action once or twice. It’s quite a sight though. One becomes used to domestic pigs and forgets how vicious a wild boar can be.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	16
Awareness	15
Brawling	12
Courage	14
Endurance	12
Intimidation	12
Physique	13
Resist Magic	10
Stealth	17
Wilderness Survival	14

Armor	0
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Beast Oil	

Dodge Base	12
Reposition Base	16
Block Base	15

Bounty	
20	

Loot	
Panther Hide (x1d6/3)	
Beast Bones (x1d6)	
Raw Meat (x1d6)	



**Medium**  
**Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	7
DEX	7
BODY	5
SPD	8
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	6

STUN	5
RUN	24
LEAP	4
STA	25
ENC	50
REC	5
HP	25

Height	0.75m
Weight	78kg
Environment	Forests
Organization	Solitary or in pairs

# Panther

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

Ah, exotic critters, panthers! I hear tell, wild women and witches in the south keep 'em as familiars. If ya see a panther's eyes glowin' in the moonlight, yer bein' spied on by a mage! Only ever seen two in my life and that's when I was passin' through Mag Turga for...ahem...business reasons. Quite strikin' if ya ask me. But I wouldn't want to be in the sights of one of 'em! The two I say, kept pace along my wagon long enough for me to put out my pipe and load a bolt. Heh, just slinkin' along in the shadows just outside the light of my lantern. I think if I'd turned that light out, or stopped the wagon for a second, they'd have been on me in no time.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Education DC:14)

Panthers, cougars, and other big cats are an ever-present threat to travelers all over the Continent. Silently, they stalk their prey, waiting for the right moment to pounce and ambush their target, usually your least armored companion. Their staggering speed and climbing ability allows them to dart into combat and then dart away just as quickly. If they feel like they are in danger, they will use their quickness to make an escape, often up the nearest tree. Once, hidden away, a panther will wait and lick its wounds until another opportunity to ambush its prey presents itself.

If you do manage to kill one before it escapes—preferably in a less bloody fashion—you could certainly find a buyer for its hide. Clothing made from their soft and luxurious fur are always in vogue with nobles and other wealthy folk. Spotted hides in particular are quite valuable, so don't let a merchant tell you that they aren't.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	15	P	4d6+4	10	—	—	1
Claw Slash	15	S	2d6+2	10	—	Bleed (30%)	2

### Ability: Pounce

By taking its move action, a panther can leap 4m from a standing start. This leap can be made horizontally or vertically.

### Ability: Expert Climber

If a panther succeeds at its Athletics check to climb, it can climb 8m per round instead of the usual 4m.

### Alternate Form: Big Cats

Stories persist of feline predators larger than panthers that stalk the forests of southern Nilfgaard. These uncreatively named “Big Cats” are consummate hunters who have been known to ambush small groups of merchants and can unhorse a knight with their pounce.

These big cats have improved attacks and an armor Stopping Power of 5. Their Claw Slash attack deals 3d6+2 and is Balanced and their Bite attack deals 5d6+4 damage and has Bleed (50%). These attacks have an attack base of 17.

*“I’ve heard tales of giant striped cats from the jungles of Ofier. Nylah was even able to produce a detailed painting of one on one of our journeys. I’ve never seen anything of quiet it’s scale or stature on the Continent but It’s not a far cry from the panthers and big cats of the south. These beasts are dangerous in their own respect, but they prefer to ambush their prey. Without the element of surprise it’s difficult for their claws to pierce metal armor.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# Hunted

## 1153, Near the Verdenian Coast Transcribed Killian of Belhaven

The falling sun set the autumn leaves on fire as Erland walked through the lonely forest. One of many in Verden outside the bounds of the dryads, its flora and fauna gave him an idea of a range of monsters that might live in its depths. Leaves crunched under his feet as he walked. Bron followed behind him, carrying what little he traveled with. From time-to-time she huffed and snorted, as if complaining to Erland of the long, cold walk. The Witcher had chosen to walk so as to stop more easily to look for clues of the monster he now tracked. The villagers who hired him had been frustratingly sparse in their description.

So far, he knew the monster preferred a diet of deer or boar, but that it had killed and partially consumed two messengers. From that he could assume the predator was not small, but from the way the prey had been killed he also knew it was not an overly large creature. Lack of its presence so far likely meant that the creature preferred hunting at night.

A glance at his surroundings told him that the time to prepare for such an encounter would be now, before the sun set completely. While darkness did little to hinder him, it was best to be prepared. He was not fond of being caught flat-footed. He pulled out a bottle from his saddlebags and sat down on a felled tree to apply Beast Oil to his blade. He had to make a few assumptions based off what he knew; such as the creature not liking to eat already dead prey. It enjoyed only the freshest of meals. This was evident in the untouched traps that still held slabs of meat from locals.

A wind blew through the trees, shaking loose leaves free to fall lazily to the ground. Erland sighed. He would have preferred to find someplace to stay the night and sleep, but work was work, and the village needed his help urgently. Weeks on the road with little reprieve from monsters had left him more tired than he liked. Erland knew he was getting older, though he refused to let it affect his work. With the oil applied, he returned the bottle to its pack. Looking over the other such bottles he carried, he considered which potion would best suit his needs for the night.

Erland took one of his more powerful Cat potions, reasoning that soon it would be better to be able to see in the dark. Goodness knew that dark came earlier these days. He pocketed it for when the sun had more fully set. Feeling better prepared, Erland continued on. His ears twitching upon hearing the pleasant burble of a nearby water source, he strayed from his current course to head that way.

The river was small, more likely to be considered a large stream. It was not deep and created a constant agreeable purr of water over stone. The scene was picturesque, with autumn trees that hung over the water, and some branches bold enough to dip into the chill of the river. Green shrubbery was a peaceful contrast to the warm colors.

Upon reaching the water, Erland tested it to make sure it was clean before filling his flask. Then, cupping his hands,

splashed some water on his face to awaken himself some for the night he planned to face. A crinkle of leaves was all the warning he had before he whirled around to see a black mass of fur lunging frighteningly fast at him. Erland hopped backward, feeling the pebbles of the river starting to give way underneath his feet as the panther's claws arced by his face. In his exhaustion, he had let his guard down. Instinctively, the Witcher raised his hand in the sign of Aard sending a wave of magic speeding into the inky form. The blast knocked the panther several feet back and sent it scurrying into a tree.

Watching the trees intently, Erland's hand grabbed the Cat potion and brought it to his lips. The taste was not one he would ever love: bitter stone fruit and muddy mushrooms bathed in acrid alcohest. But it did its job and soon Erland's vision shifted to a field of monochrome grey. Just as his vision was adjusting, a second mass of black fur slammed into him, catching the Witcher by surprise. The panther clawed down his armor with a horrendous sound of screeching metal. He rolled with the force of the panther and manage to get enough momentum to leap away to his feet, thrusting a hand out with the sign of Igni. Blazing fire leapt at his second attacker as the first circled him, looking to surround him. The shades of grey made it easier to distinguish where the black panthers were in the dark, despite the flash of bright fire.

Erland drew his steel sword, glancing back and forth between the flanking cats. One pounced. Erland was ready and spun into the attack, deftly dodging the panther's claw and slicing into its belly. He had to take a leaping dive to dodge the second panther but as he fell he swung wide, his blade slicing into the creature's leg. Both panthers sulked further back for a moment, licking at their wounds, which flowed with blood from the Devana rune glowing on Erland's blade. The witcher could see them contemplating running, as was their nature if things got too rough. If they ran now, he would have to chase them. Even if they retreated tonight there was no guarantee the bleeding would kill them, and they would return. Erland baited the second panther by attacking the first, turning his back knowingly to the enemy and making a sweeping cut. The first backed away quickly. Erland was ready for the attack that came from behind. He spun out of the way, slicing for where he had been. The sword went through the body like butter, splitting the panther's head from its shoulders in a shower of blood. As Erland landed he saw the first panther break into a run towards the trees, not liking the odds. Erland raised a hand, casting the sign of Axii to calm the stun temporarily. He could feel it take hold as a bright white light glowed around the panther's head and it stumbled as if it were drunk. Erland crossed the distance as Axii wore off and sliced down into its neck, feeling the life leave its body as he pulled his sword out. Erland sighed. It was done. Maybe now he could head back and find a warmer place to sleep through the night.







# Cursed Ones

*Where there's a cursed one there's a story. A sorrowful and often avoidable story. I've cured werewolves, put botchlings to rest, and weeded archespores across the Continent; and every hunt starts with someone weaving a sad tale and ends with me uncovering the ugly truth. If you want to see the worst of humanity look for cursed ones.*

—Erland of Larvik



Curses are a strange a form of magic. Of course, mages can curse. Priests and priestesses can curse. It appears that people who are killed can curse. Someone who hates profoundly can curse without dying. How can people who do not ordinarily use magic summon enough magic with their dying breath to transform people? How does hate translate into magic? Some curses can be lifted, apparently some cannot. The person who curses can say “I curse you to sleep until someone feeds you a newt’s eyebrows!” How do they do that? Are there demons or devils assigned to execute curses and monitor their conditions? Or avenging gods? Some curses are straightforward. “With my dying breath I call on the fates to turn my brother-in-law into a wererat!” In fact, werereatures seem to be a popular curse. Wererats, wercats, and werewolves are all curse options. Werereatures can either be the result of a curse or they can be the offspring of werebeasts; so, it could be called a multi-generational curse. May your cows run dry, may your sheep become scaly. If you ask people how that works, they say, “Magic.” Sorry, but that’s not enough of an explanation.

There are even cursed plants, which grow on the blood-soaked ground where murders, executions, and other atrocities have taken place. To my knowledge, these plants are not cursed by anyone. No begrudging botanist cursed their rose garden to transform into a hideous monstrosity. Somehow the unique magic of blood and horror emerges from the ground as these ferocious plants. Most soci-

eties do, at some time, believe that blood has magical properties and in some cases scholars and magicians have proved this fact. Why then are butchers not cursed? Or surgeons? Or torturers? Do these plants have a mission? Are they supposed to avenge the people who have spilled the blood from which they grow? How would a plant do that?

Then there are creatures that are cursed by the abhorrence of their actions. By the telling of folktales, there was no curse cast to create the vendigo. No tale of a starving expedition into the Blue Mountains ending with a dramatic attack and a dying man’s last breath cursing his once-friend to transform into a ghastly cannibal creature. Perhaps the actions that lead to the birth of this creature are, in themselves, so terrible that a curse manifests. But then, if so, why doesn’t every monstrous human eventually stumble upon the same path?

Witchers can supposedly break curses. But as curses seem to be quite unique, how do they do this? The Witcher Geralt became known after breaking the curse on King Foltst’s daughter—who was cursed by extreme hatred before birth and born a striga. I believe he also lifted a death curse from King Henselt.

I should refute one common misconception. It is impossible to be cursed by being bitten by a cursed werewolf, plant, or unborn child.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Cursed One Encounters

While they’re all born from death and betrayal, cursed ones are a very versatile group of monsters that can be used in many situations.

The characters could come to a beautiful flower garden in a capital city and find out that a bloody coup was carried out there, and now there are a bunch of **archespores** mingling among the flower beds.

**Botchlings** are not uncommon in the war-ravaged northern kingdoms. The characters could wind up protecting a village from two **botchlings** that were born of twin children who were sacrificed to a god to protect the village from the Nilfgaardians.

While traveling across the high mountains, the characters could start encountering thralls of the **vendigo** who were taken from other parties of travelers. This zombie-like assault continues until they can find the **vendigo** and kill it.

For a really complex session, you could have one or more of the characters/NPCs cursed by a **vendigo**.



Skill Base	
Athletics	8
Awareness	9
Brawling	9
Courage	10
Endurance	10
Intimidation	9
Physique	8
Resist Magic	10
Stealth	10
Wilderness Survival	8

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Poison	

Susceptibilities	
Cursed Oil, Fire	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	12
<b>Reposition Base</b>	—
<b>Block Base</b>	12

Bounty	
30	

Loot	
Archespore Juice (x1d6/2)	
Archespore Tendrils (x1d6)	



**Easy  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
—

INT	1
REF	6
DEX	5
BODY	5
SPD	6
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	5

STUN	5
RUN	18
LEAP	—
STA	25
ENC	5
REC	5
HP	25

<b>Height</b>	2.5m
<b>Weight</b>	68kg
<b>Environment</b>	Near corpses
<b>Organization</b>	Groves of 3 to 5

# Archespore

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

So here's the deal. When a real evil person bleeds on the petals of a flower, there's a chance that flower'll become an archespore. One of these huge, acid spittin', earth tunnelin', man eatin' monsters. Once that's happened there's no turnin' back. Archespores are just like any other weed, just—y'know—evil. They'll spread like wild fire, breedin' more monstrosities and killin' anythin' that comes near 'em. If ya see a brown one, run for yer life. The brown ones are the most deadly and they got the worst temper. Luckily, ya can burn 'em up pretty well if ya get the drop on 'em, or ya happen to have some zerrikanian fire on ya. Stocks are full if you're interested, heh.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

As you travel the Continent, try to stay informed of the histories of any lands that you travel through. Be on the lookout for tales of vile murder, bloody pogroms, or other despicable acts, as locations that once bore witness to such cruelty may now be teeming with archespores.

When traveling through such locations, as they are often hard to avoid on the Continent, remain vigilant, as an archespore can hide nearly perfectly amid any foliage.

In combat, an archespore is a versatile fighter. From range, it is capable of spitting acidic venom. Getting close isn't a terribly good idea either, as their powerful jaws have a nasty bite. Archspore are also known to burrow into the ground, leaving behind a pod that explodes in a cloud of thorns and venom.

When fighting an archespore, stay on your toes to dodge its venom spit and keep away from its explosive pods. Gold Oriole Potion can make the fight much easier, as can Cursed Oil. Most importantly, bring fire. No matter how terrifying an archspore may be, it's still a plant. Burn it out.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	12	P	2d6+2	10	—	Long Reach	1

### Vulnerability: Rooted

An archespore cannot move without using its Burrow ability and it cannot jump. It's SPD and RUN statistics only apply to its Burrow Ability, and it cannot use the Reposition defense action.

### Ability: Camouflage

When amongst a group of flowers or foliage, an archespore blends in and gain a +10 to their Stealth skill.

### Ability: Spit Acid

By taking an action, an archespore can roll an attack roll with a base 10 against a target within 8m to spit acid on them. If this target fails to defend, they take 2d6 damage to a random location and any armor on that location takes 1d6/2 ablation damage. If the target successfully blocks this attack, the item they used to block still takes 1d6/2 ablation damage.

### Ability: Burrow

By taking its movement action, an archespore can burrow through the ground and come up 6m away. If the archespore takes its whole action to move, it can move up to 18m. An archespore can burrow through sand, dirt, and hard packed ground but it cannot burrow through solid stone.

### Ability: Pod Explosion

By taking its full round, an archespore can burrow away from a target in melee range and leave an explosive pod. At the end of the round, the pod will explode, forcing anyone within 2m of the pod to make a DC:14 Athletics check to reposition away. If the targets fails their Athletics check, they take 1d6 damage to all body locations and are **poisoned**.

### Alternate Form: Brown, Green, & Purple

Three types of archespores exist in nature, and they are all of varying power levels. The stats presented here are the standard statistics for brown archespores which are the weakest archespores. Green archespores have a 50% chance of **poisoning** their target when they deal damage with a Bite attack. Purple archespores gain a +2 to their attack and defense rolls.



Skill Base	
Athletics	17
Awareness	14
Brawling	15
Courage	16
Endurance	14
Intimidation	14
Physique	15
Resist Magic	15
Stealth	16
Wilderness Survival	10

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Cursed Oil, Black Blood Potion	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	16
<b>Reposition Base</b>	17
<b>Block Base</b>	16

Bounty	
600 Crowns	

Loot	
Botchling Ear (x1d6/3)	
Botchling Blood (x1d6)	
Botchling Brain (x1)	
Botchling Bones (x1d6)	



**Medium  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	8
DEX	9
BODY	5
SPD	7
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	8

STUN	6
RUN	21
LEAP	4
STA	30
ENC	50
REC	6
HP	60



<b>Height</b>	0.30m
<b>Weight</b>	3.5kg
<b>Environment</b>	Settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or in pairs

# Botchling

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:15)

*Ugh.... I could go my whole life without thinkin' of botchlin's and I'd be a happy dwarf. Ya see, when a baby's born without a lovin' mother, or their thrown away or the like, they turn into a botchlin'. These twisted little creatures that hate everythin' and feed on the blood of pregnant women and babies. Ya can probably see why I ain't so keen on thinkin' about 'em. Even if ya could get yer nerve up to slay the beast, it's wicked fast and stronger than it's got any right to be. Heh, only way to put the creature of its misery without hirin' a witcher to convince its birth mother to spend the night, with the beast in her arms. From what I heard, soon as the sun rises, the beast'll release its soul and all'll be good.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:15)

Botchlings are terrible creatures born from the unceremonious burial or abandonment of babies. Unfortunately, during the Third Northern War, there are plenty of infants who have been abandoned or killed. Luckily, botchlings are among the least violent monsters in the category of cursed ones. While they feed on the blood of pregnant women and other infants they are not easily roused to anger and will rarely attack a passerby with no provocation.

If you must fight a botchling, be careful, as it will transform as soon as it feels threatened, into a much larger, more dangerous form, resembling an alghoul. In this form, the botchling's body can project hard spikes which damage weapons and people alike. This combined with their razor-sharp claws and vampiric bite attack make them a formidable melee foe. Though in its combat form, a botchling will rarely try to drink its foe's blood, preferring to tear them apart.

If possible, it is far more beneficial to try and "save" a botchling by breaking its curse. If the parent of the botchling is able to bury the botchling on their land and perform the elven naming ritual of Aymm Rhoin, the botchling will rise one day and one night later as a Lubberkin. This lubberkin then acts as a guardian spirit for the household it belongs to. This ritual is not easy to complete as not only must the parent of the botchling perform it, but the botchling must be kept calm during the ritual.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	16	P	3d6	10	—	Improved Armor Piercing, Drain Blood	1
Claw Slash	16	S	5d6+4	15	—	—	2

### Ability: Drain Life Force

While within 2m of a sleeping target, a botchling can drain the strength of the target. Every night the botchling does this, the target fails to regenerate Stamina which also lowers their maximum Stamina by 5. This Stamina damage is cumulative but cannot lower the target's Stamina below 5. The damage can be removed by getting a good night's sleep away from the botchling.

### Ability: Drain Blood

If a botchling deals damage to a target with their Bite that target takes an extra 4 points of damage and the botchling heals 4 points of damage.

### Transformation: Combat Form

When threatened—or after draining blood from a target—a botchling uses its full turn to transform into its combat form. In this form, the botchling gains a +2 to REF, DEX, & SPD and a +3 to BODY. The botchling also gains access to its Claw Slash attack, and can use its action to grow hard spikes all over its body. When these spikes are active, anyone who successfully grapples the botchling takes 2d6 damage to their torso. Also, any weapon that strikes the botchling takes 1 point of ablation damage. If the botchling is **stunned**, it retracts these spikes immediately.

Once transformed, a botchling can be forced to revert to its original state by using the Axii sign or the Mind Manipulation spell and succeeding at a DC:18 Spellcasting check. However, if the botchling is attacked after the magic is cast, it changes back into its combat form and the DC to transform it back will raise to 25.

### Transformation: Lubberkin

If a parent of the botchling performs the elven naming ritual of Aymm Rhoin, they can transform the botchling into a lubberkin. This requires a grave to be dug for the botchling and for a specific incantation to be spoken by the parent. The lubberkin rises from the buried body a day and a night later. A lubberkin is a friendly, guardian house spirit that lives in the house of its family.

Once transformed into a lubberkin, the botchling becomes **incorporeal** and can take its move action to move 8m either horizontally and vertically. While in the air, a lubberkin must use repositions to defend.

Furthermore, the botchling loses its ability to transform into its combat form as well as the Drain Life Force Ability and the Drain Blood Ability.



Skill Base	
Athletics	19
Awareness	16
Brawling	16
Courage	18
Hex Weaving	17
Endurance	19
Intimidation	17
Physique	18
Resist Coercion	—
Resist Magic	18
Stealth	19
Wilderness Survival	18

<b>Armor</b>	10
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Charm, Freeze, Disease, Coercion, Snow & Ice Conditions	

Susceptibilities	
Cursed Oil, Dimeritium Bombs, Moondust Bombs	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	16
<b>Reposition Base</b>	19
<b>Block Base</b>	20

Bounty	
1500	

Loot	
Vendigo Fur (x1d6)	
Essence of Death (x2d6)	
Vendigo Heart (x1)	
Crystalized Essence (x1d6/2)	



### Hard Difficult

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision  
Scent Tracking*

INT	5
REF	9
DEX	11
BODY	10
SPD	9
EMP	1
CRA	2
WILL	10

STUN	10
RUN	27
LEAP	5
STA	50
ENC	100
REC	10
HP	100

<b>Height</b>	3.5m
<b>Weight</b>	110kg
<b>Environment</b>	High mountains
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Vendigo

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:18)

Strange.... Never heard of somethin' called a vendigo, but folk've got all sorts of superstitions about travlin' through the Kestrels and the Dragons and the Blue mountains and whatnot. Last time I crossed Kestrel Mountains some innkeep told me to watch the forest line and pack 6 days more rations than I thought I'd need. At the time I thought he was just lookin' to swindle me but I'm not sure these days. Heard some stories from folk in Caingorn recently that'd put a chill up yer spine. Talk of some kinda specter that haunts travelers and makes 'em hunger like nothin' else. Some mountaineers in Caingorn've taken to carrying extra rations and wearin' these ceremonial masks from far north.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

Vendigo haunt the highest mountains of the Continent. You would be most unfortunate to come across one. A rack of elk antlers crowns their head. Their bodies stretch tall, and their features are ragged and pale, skin twisted into the form of a naked and starving traveler whose lips are caked with blood.

In addition to its disease riddled claws, vendigo are capable of powerful magic, including a terrible curse. The curse drives its victims to commit cannibalism over the course of three days. If they submit, the vendigo gains control over them. To combat against the threat of vendigo, you must be vigilant in the mountains. The monster is afraid of fire, so always carry a torch. Should it go out, a vendigo may be near. It often won't approach a campfire, so keep yours burning overnight. And should any of your party crave strangely for meat, leave the mountains immediately and get them to a priest.

If it comes to it, burn the monster out. Many of your party will die in the process, but maybe you will be lucky.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	20	P	7d6	15	—	Disease (60%)	1
Claw Slash	20	S	5d6+4	15	—	Bleed (50%), Disease (25%)	2

### Vulnerability: Fear of Fire

A vendigo is afraid of fire and must force itself to come near it. A vendigo must make a DC:20 Courage check to come within 6m of a fire the size of a campfire or a DC:26 Courage check to come within 10m of a bonfire. A vendigo doesn't need to make a Courage check to come near a torch, or weapon that is on fire but it will avoid attacking the wielder of that item first if possible.

### Ability: Summon Blizzard

By taking its action, a vendigo can summon a blizzard in an area (within a 50m radius) initially centered on the vendigo. This blizzard creates **Ice and Snow** conditions and anyone in this blizzard is unable to see anything that is farther than 4m from them. By spending an action, the vendigo can move the blizzard up to 20m. This blizzard lasts 24 hours, or until the vendigo uses an action to dismiss. A Mage or Priest can attempt to dispel this blizzard, by spending 10 STA points and taking an action to roll a Spellcasting check (DC:20). The blizzard dissipates after the vendigo dies. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability but do not dissipate the blizzard.

### Ability: Spoil Food

By taking its action, a vendigo can cause an amount of food and drink no larger than 1 square meter within 10m to go rotten. Anyone who consumes this food must make a DC: 18 Endurance check or be **nauseated**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Vendigo's Curse

By using its action, a vendigo can make direct eye contact with a target and roll a Hex Weaving roll against the target's Resist Magic roll. If this target fails to beat the vendigo's roll it is cursed with the vendigo's curse. The curse progresses in three stages. The morning after the target is cursed, they wake up feeling a strong desire to consume fresh meat. This desire persists throughout the day and if that target is unable to consume fresh meat by the next morning, they take a -1 penalty to all actions and halve their Stamina for the next day. On the second morning, the target wakes with a constant growling in their stomach and a deep, unquenchable hunger for fresh, bloody, meat. The target must roll below their WILL to pass up any chance to get meat (Gifts from travelers, a passing game animal, rotted supplies, or the like). If they are unable to eat any raw meat before the next morning, the target suffers a -3 penalty to all actions and quarters their Stamina on the next day. On the third morning, the target wakes with an intense hunger for meat that gradually progresses toward cannibalistic desires. Finally, at sundown, the target must roll under their WILL or succumb to the Vendigo's Curse and become a Vendigo Spawn. If they succeed, they remain in control and on each subsequent day, the target's WILL is halved (minimum 1). Once transformed into a Vendigo Spawn, a character lowers their Intelligence Statistic to 2, gains an Immunity to Coercion and Magical Charms, and becomes completely controlled by the vendigo. They can only be brought back by the death of the vendigo or by being taken out of the mountains and having a Mage or Priest roll a Spellcasting check that beats the vendigo's original Hex Weaving check. The magic user must spend 10 STA points and takes an action to roll this Spell Casting check. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.







# The Orphan

1149, Oxenfurt

Transcribed Leopold of Attre

Erland grimaced, kneeling over the pallid body of a young woman in her blood-stained bed. The Witcher could see the deep bite marks clear as day on the poor girl's corpse. Four ragged bite marks, each the size of a child's mouth. From just behind him, Erland heard a quiet prayer murmured. The words were foreign, but the intent was clear. The Witcher stood and looked back at the young Ofieri woman behind him. Her name was Nylah, but all Erland knew of her beyond that pleasantries was that she came to the Continent on a merchant vessel from Ofier and she had named a substantial price when they spoke earlier that day. "You were right to find me. Your friend was killed by a botchling. Did hear anything about her being with child?"

"She has a son," Nylah said coldly, as her gripped tightened on the gilt handle of a curved blade at her waist. "His name is Albin. Izolda sent him to live at the church of Melitele until I could come take him to Ofier with me."

"But you heard nothing of a new child?"

Nylah tore her eyes away from Izolda's pale corpse to look into Erland's eyes "She mentioned an affair with a watch guard a while ago. She said there had been a mistake, but the guardsman said he would take care of it. But I don't know who he was or where he might be. What can you do about this, Witcher?"

"Without one of its parents present there isn't very much I can do to help the child." Silently, Erland scanned the room, searching every nook and cranny for any signs of the creature. "A botchling is born from a neglected child or a discarded newborn. There's a small chance that you, being a close friend of the mother could perform the ritual to transform the botchling into a lubberkin but...."

"I'm not interested in changing it into something else. I want you to help me kill it. Any monster that can do this to a young mother isn't a helpless little baby that needs to be saved. It's a monster and it would be kinder for us to kill it and allow its soul to pass on."

After a moment, Erland glanced out the window at the dull orange of the setting sun and unclipped his potion case with a deft movement. Without a willing relative, there wasn't much choice. "If that's the case, we'll have to lure the creature out. After the sun sets it will go on the hunt. An aggravated botchlings can be a surprisingly dangerous opponent. If you're insistent on fighting, stay close to me and stay on your toes. Our best bet will be to stun the creature and try to keep it in its natural form. But once blood is drawn, that won't be as easy."

As the sun set, the Witcher knocked back a vial of vile blue potion and set to work. Cursed One Oil slathered along his silver blade, armor strapped and adjusted, muscles loosened and prepared for a fight. He could hear Nylah pacing quickly, drawing her curved blade periodically, and making quick practiced cuts. Just beyond the walls of the home, Erland could hear something that his medallion had already sensed.

Erland leapt to his feet as the tiny, wrinkled form of the botchling crawled under the door, gaping mouth emitting strange mewling noises. With one hand, Erland sent a wave of magic streaking at the botchling, weaving a bright white light around its head. As the botchling staggered, Nylah lunged forward, bringing the blade of her shortsword down onto the creature's back with a sickening crunch. A piercing shriek echoed through the building, and the form of the botchling leapt aside, beginning to pulse and swell.

Before their eyes, the tiny form of the botchling grew and stretched. Wrinkled skin grew taut and leathery and muscles rippled and bulged as the creature seemed to almost inflate. The horrific infantile face of the botchling matured and twisted into a creased scowling face. Erland took particular notice as the cursed one's soft hands morphed into long, powerful talons, scraping against the ground in anticipation. Nylah's brow furrowed as she took half a step back, raising her blade defensively and shouting at the creature to draw its attention.

Seeing the creature's gnarled face turn towards Nylah, the Witcher leapt forward in a whirl of silver. Blood splattered as Erland's blade caught the botchling in the side and Nylah charged, slashing for the botchling which had already made a quick retreat from Erland's swings. The edge of the merchant's curved sword caught the botchling along its arm, slicing open a large bleeding gash and the monster let out an enraged roar.

Before Erland could react, the botchling lunged knocking Nylah to the ground and lashing out with its ragged claws at her. Nylah brought her arms up to protect her face, clenching her teeth as the botchling's claws tore into her flesh.

As the botchling's claws tore into Nylah's arms, Erland cast his hand out, fingers contorted into the sign of Axii. As he felt the magic struggling to take hold, the Witcher pushed as hard as he could, binding the magic of water around the creature's mind and body, and forcing it to calm. This wouldn't last long, but it could give Nylah the time she needed.

As the once-fearsome monster shrunk, Nylah acted quickly, scooping up its infantile form in her arms and slipping a wickedly curved jambiya from her sash. Blood poured from the wounds on her arms, but her face remained resolute. Erland remained focused, keeping the botchling bound in its current form with all his might.

"I'm sorry," Nylah said stoically, burying the blade of the curved dagger into the wounded botchling's chest. "May you find rest in the afterlife."

As the botchling's body went still, Erland gently reached out to take Nylah's shoulder. He could feel her muscles still taut as she glanced up at him. "I'll need help with the burial rights, Erland. I want to leave tomorrow at first light. I have my own monster to hunt."







# Hybrids

*From succubi to manticores to harpies, hybrids run the gambit from sentient creatures to slaving monsters. In truth, the classification of hybrid is a large net for a large grouping of monsters. A wide variety of monsters with physical aspects of multiple animals or features of humans fall into the same category.*

—Erland of Larvik



By far, hybrids are the strangest category of monsters. As the name suggests, they appear to be part one thing, and part another. Most appear to be half-human and have human-like intelligence. Sirens and lamias appear to be half-human and half-fish, but they also have large, bat-like wings. Harpies appear to be half-human and half-bird. Succubi and their counterparts, incubi, are humanoid with horns and goat-like legs. I emphasize “appear” because one of the things I find strangest is that there are no origin stories, no horrible wife who is drowned at sea and returns as a siren. How have storytellers avoided the terrible “mother-in-law becomes a harpy” story? Especially since most of these things seem to have a raging hatred of humans. I suppose this conceit would make these creatures cursed ones if we were to continue to use the Witchers’ classifications of monsters, but we have no other explanation for them, save perhaps for a very regrettable tryst between a number of young villagers and a menagerie of wildlife.

Perhaps, though, there is another possibility. Some hybrids can be fair, willing maids wanting to lure men to them. Many have wings, giving them a distinct advantage over humans on the battlefield. Some have a powerful shriek that can scramble their targets’ brains, and others are built with a myriad of natural weapons and poisons. Many of them have some magic, but it appears to be different for each. It is as though they are created specifically to be human nightmare creatures. It could be postulated that many of the hybrids

we know may have been the result of magical experimentation, either by magicians on our Continent or others beyond the Conjunction. But of course, this is only speculation. It could equally be surmised that witchers simply place all these monsters in the same category as a handy classification for any monster that occupies a higher position on the food chain and has evolved to show aspects of multiple species.

There are hybrids that are not part human and they do share the trait of hostility to humans. Fortunately, the hybrids generally live in distant places. They live underwater and they nest on ledges in the mountains. As is true of most monster groups there are some that have adapted to living near humans using us for their needs. As with some other monsters they have learned to attack humans in numbers. As one captain said, “If you hear women singing at sea, turn around, even if it means sailing into the storm.”

In most cases, the trick to dealing with a hybrid is tied to the jumble of physical traits it shows. Creatures such as sirens and harpies are aerial creatures whose capability to move on land is limited. Once grounded, they become quite easy for a skilled swordsman to finish. In the same respect, the lecherous temptations of a succubus or incubus may be turned on the creature and used to their detriment, persuading them with lascivious offers.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Hybrid Encounters

Hybrids are among the most versatile monster types in *The Witcher*. They can be found almost anywhere and have many motives.

After finding a treasure or raiding a ship, the characters could wind up being harassed by **harpies** who want the shiny treasure. Things only become more complicated when their ship runs up on a sandbar.

It could be a shadowy gang of assassins hires the characters to find a **manticores** and extract vials of its deadly Bohun Upas venom. But they have to find a way to milk the **manticores** of its venom without being killed.

The characters could wind up tracking a trail of unfaithful lovers and enthralled nobles to find that a number of **succubus** (and perhaps **incubus**) have created a secret brothel in a major city and are draining the locals.

If you want a highly intrigue-focused game, the characters could encounter a **succubus** who has infiltrated a noble court.



Skill Base	
Athletics	7
Awareness	14
Brawling	13
Courage	9
Endurance	7
Intimidation	8
Physique	10
Resist Magic	8
Stealth	11
Wilderness Survival	13

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Hybrid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	6
<b>Reposition Base</b>	7
<b>Block Base</b>	12

Bounty	
15	

Loot	
Harpy Feathers (x1d6)	
Harpy Talons (x1d6/3)	
Mundane Items (Nest)(x1d6)	
Harpy Eggs (Nest)(x1d6/2)	



**Easy  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
—

INT	1
REF	4
DEX	5
BODY	5
SPD	3
EMP	2
CRA	2
WILL	4

STUN	4
RUN	9
LEAP	1
STA	20
ENC	50
REC	4
HP	20

<b>Height</b>	1.5m
<b>Weight</b>	60kg
<b>Environment</b>	Mountains & coasts
<b>Organization</b>	Flocks of 4 to 8

# Harpy

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

Hard to travel the mountains without runnin' into harpies here an there. They ain't usually much of threat—heh, to a skilled killer—but if ya get a flock of 'em on ya yer gonna have a rough time of it. Harpies like to swoop down on their prey in packs and claw at 'em with their talons so ya wanna stay in yer wagon if yer lucky enough to have one. A good steady hand with a crossbow or a longbow's useful too, 'cause it ain't likely you'll get 'em on the ground. And make sure not to stop and camp if ya know there're harpies around. Harpies've got dark magic that let's 'em steal your dreams and read yer mind while ya sleep. Once they get in yer head they can read yer mind whenever they please.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

Often found on cliffs located near human settlements, harpies can spell doom from the skies to unwary travelers and merchants. Harpies are fond of stealing human treasures, preferably shiny ones, and bringing them back to their nest.

Though typically cowardly, harpies do not hesitate to attack if they have numbers on their side, or their nest is in danger. They hunt in large flocks, diving down to attack, before flying back to safety. When fighting harpies, try not to get surrounded. If you can, fight them in an enclosed space where they can't gain as much of an advantage from flight or numbers. Knocking them out of the air is a necessity. Once they are on the ground, a silver sword makes quick work of them.

While your average harpies are simply feral, Celaeno harpies are fully sapient and are known to steal dreams and turn them into dream crystals, which they hoard. Their intelligence makes them an entirely different kind of threat, although just as easy to kill.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	12	S	2d6+4	10	—	—	1
Wing Buffet	12	B	1d6+2	10	—	Stagger (30%)	1

### Ability: Flight

As long as its wings remain, a harpy can take its move action to move 8m either horizontally or vertically. While in the air, a harpy must use repositions to defend and its Athletics base raises to 13. The harpy can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 5 points of damage with an attack. If the harpy is knocked out of the air it must make a DC:16 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a harpy can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

### Alternate Form: Celaeno Harpy

Among a group of harpies you may find a celaeno harpy or you may find a small flock of them near civilization. Celaeno harpies are sapient beings who gain a +2 bonus to the Intelligence Statistic. They do not interact with other creatures very often but they do have a base Resist Coercion of 13.

Celaeno harpies also have the ability to steal people's dreams and encase them in crystals. When within 4m of a sleeping person a celaeno harpies can take its full turn to snatch that creature's dream and infuse it into a gemstone to create a Dream Crystal. Dream Crystals contain a single dream which can be viewed either by slotting them into a megascope and making a DC:17 Magic Training check, or utilizing a Dream Crystal projector. There will always be a Dream Crystal Projector in or near the lair of celaeno harpy. They are not made by the harpies but the harpies have learned how to use them. A Dream Crystal can be used as a focus with a value of 1. If the dream is particularly powerful or comes from a very magically potent creature the Dream Crystal can act as Focus with a value of 3. When killed, you can loot 1d6/2 units of infused crystal as well as 1d6/2 Dream Crystals from a celaeno harpy.

*“An average flock of harpies can be scared away. They are naturally cowardly creatures, which is why they hunt in groups. The problem is that a flock of harpies you have scared away will eventually return.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	18
Awareness	16
Brawling	18
Courage	20
Endurance	21
Intimidation	17
Physique	23
Resist Magic	18
Stealth	17
Wilderness Survival	16

<b>Armor</b>	15
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Poison	

Susceptibilities	
Hybrid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	17
<b>Reposition Base</b>	18
<b>Block Base</b>	20

Bounty	
1600	

Loot	
Manticore Wing Membranes (x2d6)	
Bohun Upas Poison (x1d6)	
Manticore Fangs (x1d6/2)	
Manticore Horn (x1d6/3)	
Manticore Stomach (x1)	



### Hard Complex

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*  
*Scent Tracking*

INT	1
REF	12
DEX	10
BODY	15
SPD	10
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	6

STUN	10
RUN	30
LEAP	6
STA	55
ENC	150
REC	11
HP	110

<b>Height</b>	1.75m
<b>Weight</b>	204kg
<b>Environment</b>	Mountains & forests
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or pairs

# Manticore

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:15)

*I hear Eyck of Denesle was killed by one of these monsters. Heh, not too surprised really. A manticore's a real piece of work and I can see a pompous knight like Eyck underestimatn' one. 'S a good thing they're pretty much extinct these days. If ya do happen to run into one of these bastards say your prayers and grip yer sword cause yer in for a fight. Wouldn't recommend runnin' from it, cause ya won't get far. If they don't take to the air and catch ya they'll pin ya with a quill shot from their tail. Heh, best bet's to try to cut off the tail soon as possible. The venom in that stinger could kill a man in a few seconds and it's harder to shake off than tar.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

The manticore is widely recognized as one of the Continent's oldest and deadliest monsters. If you are unlucky enough to come into contact with one of the few surviving manticores, your luck will have to turn sharply to survive the encounter, because every part of a manticore is built for killing. Its body, that of a lion's, is built to pounce and, tearing it apart it's food with its claws that never stop growing. Its wings aid in its never ending hunt by knocking its prey to the ground, where they are sure to become a meal. A manticore can eat twenty people every moon cycle and still be hungry. Somehow by gathering poisonous sap from the Bohun Upas tree, a manticore's scorpion-like tail can deliver a horrible poison, deadlier than any alchemist's worst concoction. A Gold Oriole Potion can save your life.

If you want to slay a manticore, your best opportunity is to wait for it to dive at you from the air. Dodge this strike correctly and the manticore will impact heavily on the ground, which will hopefully leave it stunned for a moment. Put your whole strength behind a single blow and strike at the beast's neck with a silver blade dripping with Hybrid Oil.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	20	P	8d6	15	—	Armor Piercing	1
Claw Slash	20	S	5d6+1	15	—	Bleed (75%)	2
Tail Strike	20	P	6d6+3	10	—	Long Reach, Bohun Upas Poison	1
Wing Buffet	20	B	4d6	10	—	Knock-Down (50%)	2

### Ability: Pounce

By taking its move action, a manticore can leap 6m from a standing start. This leap can be made horizontally or vertically.

### Ability: Bohun Upas Poison

If a manticore's Tail Strike deals damage to a target, there is a 75% chance they are **poisoned** with Bohun Upas Poison. This venom induces the **Poisoned** Condition however, the character must make a DC:25 Endurance check to end the effect. Alternatively, a Doctor must take a full round to make a DC:20 Healing Hand's check. When looted from a dead manticore, Bohun Upas Venom can be used to coat weapons.

### Ability: Flight

As long as its wings remain, a manticore can take its move action to move 10m either horizontally or vertically. While in the air, a manticore must use repositions to defend. The manticore can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 10 points of damage with an attack. If the manticore is knocked out of the air, it must make a DC:20 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a manticore can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack, and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

### Ability: Diving Strike

While in the air, a manticore can take its full action to fold in its wings and dive at a target within 10m by rolling a claw attack. If target fails to defend, they take 2d6 damage per 2m the manticore dived to the torso, are knocked **prone** and pinned by the manticore. If the target successfully blocks this attack, they negate the damage but must beat the manticore in a Physique contest or be knocked **prone** and pinned by the manticore. If target succeeds in defending against the manticore with Dodge, Reposition, or Parry, the manticore hits the ground, takes 4d6 damage to both its legs and must make a Stun Save.



Skill Base	
Athletics	15
Awareness	12
Brawling	16
Charisma	15
Courage	15
Disguise	10
Endurance	14
Intimidation	12
Persuasion	14
Physique	18
Resist Coercion	16
Resist Magic	16
Seduction	18
Sleight of Hand	10
Stealth	12
Wilderness Survival	9

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Magical Charms	

Susceptibilities	
Hybrid Oil, Dimeritium Bombs	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	14
<b>Reposition Base</b>	15
<b>Block Base</b>	16

Bounty	
400	

Loot	
Succubus Horn (x1d6/3)	
Succubus Heart (x1)	
Infused Dust (x2d6)	
Mundane Items (x1d6)	



**Medium**  
**Simple**

**Intelligence**  
**Sapient**

**Senses**  
—

INT	5
REF	7
DEX	8
BODY	12
SPD	6
EMP	10
CRA	4
WILL	8

STUN	10
RUN	18
LEAP	3
STA	150
ENC	120
REC	10
HP	100

<b>Height</b>	1.8m
<b>Weight</b>	80kg
<b>Environment</b>	Near settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Succubus

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

Heh, had the pleasure of meetin' a succubus once or twice. Never in bed of course! Guess if I had to go that'd be a pretty good way to do it but I got more to do before I climb in to that bed! Guess succubi ain't all bad. I've had a good conversations with one once. Honestly, might like 'em better than humans, heh! Thing is, they got this need to sleep with folk and...absorb their life force I guess. I hear most of the people who sleep with succubi don't make it to the next morning. Can't say I know all the details on that but I heard the succubus takes the life force of their bed partner and uses it to get pregnant with a devil. If I'm honest, I didn't bring that up with the succubus I met.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:12)

Despite the superstitions of the commonfolk, succubi are not demons, and they were not put on the Continent to tempt men and suck away their souls. Interestingly enough, succubi are relatives of the fiend, despite being classified as a different type of monster. They sustain themselves with food and drink like a human and do not need to sleep with others to survive. However, succubi are driven by an insatiable lust which pushes them to attempt to partake in the pleasures of the flesh as often as possible. This might not be a problem if their superhuman strength and stamina didn't lead to them manhandling, and exhausting mortals to death in search of satisfaction.

If you have to deal with a succubus it's often a good idea to attempt negotiation first. Succubi can be reasoned with like any other sapient creature and their resistance to seduction is tremendously low. Keep in the mind that this may still seal your doom. If you must fight a succubus keep in mind that their superior strength allows them to stun creatures with devastating headbutts and knock a full-grown man off his feet with a well-placed kick. They are naturally immune to magical charms and their command over fire magic allows them to summon fireballs and bursts of flame which can distract melee opponents and light attackers on fire.

While rare, male succubi, known as incubi, do exist. Incubi are uncommon on the Continent and it is rumored that they only appear during the Saovine night. This rumor has neither been confirmed or denied but incubi have been spotted in the wilderness on Savoine night, so it is likely to be true.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Headbutt	13	B	5d6	15	—	Crushing Force, Stun (-2)	1
Kick	16	B	4d6+4	10	—	Crushing Force, Knock-Down (50%)	1
Punch	16	B	3d6+3	10	—	Crushing Force	2

### Vulnerability: Insatiable Lust

A succubus is in a near constant state of lust, which is only increased when they are in the presence of other humanoids. A succubus's Resist Coercion base is considered to be an 8 when resisting the charms of anyone they could feasibly bed down with. If the succubus feels threatened or has been openly attacked by a creature, their Resist Coercion base returns to normal.

### Ability: Burst of Flame

When a succubus is targeted by a melee attack, they can choose to roll a defense at a base of 14 instead of a standard defense to create a burst of fire between them and their opponent which distracts the attacker, negating their attack, and has a 30% chance of lighting the attacker on **fire**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Fire Ball

By taking its action, a succubus can roll an attack at a base 16 to hurl a ball of fire at a target within 10m. The target can defend with any defense except parry. If the target fails to defend against this attack, they take 4d6 damage to a random location and have a 50% chance of being lit on **fire**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

*“Succubi and incubi are often the easiest hybrids to negotiate with. They are sapient creatures with many of the same desires and impulses as humans. That being said, I’ve known many witchers who have had ‘exciting’ incidents while negotiating with succubi and incubi.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# With Hunting Eyes

## 1157, The Kestrel Mountains Transcribed Aderyn of Spalla

A thorny, venom-laden stinger shot toward Erland's head. The Witcher rolled, barely dodging, a few drops of steaming venom splashed onto his boot. He squinted into the sky even as he was still getting up from the ground, watching the bat-winged shape of the manticore soar upward, pushing to a great height. Erland knew he had mere moments before it would dive on him once again. He could feel the burning pain of the wounds he had already sustained. He had been lucky enough to avoid its deadly stinger, but its razor-sharp claws had opened deep gashes. Already, the Witcher's enhanced senses were nearly overwhelmed by the smell of blood, and acrid poison. He would need to move to a new spot where Vaz could get a clean shot from his hideout and the manticore couldn't take to the air. Erland traced a wide circle, watching the silhouetted form above him. As he saw the glint of Vaz's silver arrow, he crouched, waiting for the manticore's dive. Erland glanced at Vaz, still impressed at how such a large human could be nearly invisible and silent in the darkness of the nearby cave.

The monstrosity was diving right at Erland now, beating its bat wings and gaining speed at an explosive rate. If he could leap back just as the monster reached him, it would hit the ground with such force it might be stunned. That would give Vaz and him the time they needed for a coordinated attack. Slowly nodding, Erland held his ground. Both men had plenty of time to prepare. It had not been difficult to find this creature. Manticores were never shy about hunting. They had no predators save for highly skilled witchers. All along the wood, the creature had marked long scratches down the trunks of trees trying to wear down its ever-growing claws. As they had walked, Erland and Vaz had found a scattering of bones, beast and human alike. In the last moon alone, 17 people had disappeared from the village. It happened so often that parties of mercenaries had been gathered to go on weekly searches looking for loved ones. Some of the missing had been identified only by objects left behind when they disappeared. Today, Erland himself had found a dagger and later down the trail, a boot that had clearly been in the woods a while. It was cracked and bleached from water and wind. He had put both into his pack to help identify the missing.

Twang! An arrow dug squarely into the creature's neck. It was perfect timing. Erland leapt out of the way with all his strength, landing and rolling to his feet inside the cave. The creature screamed, swooping its huge, bat-like wings wildly in panic as it scrambled to keep from hitting the ground face first. The beast hit the ground, landing hard on its front paws and collapsing to the ground with a roar. As the manticore struggled to regain its footing, Erland rushed in. The Witcher brought his sword down on the manticore with all his might, cleaving deep into its front leg and feeling the bone snap. Bellowing in pain, the manticore pounced toward Erland, swinging its dagger

claws for his face. The hunter threw himself backwards, feeling the pointed talons tear into the flesh of his face, mercifully only grazing his skull. Falling to the rocky ground, Erland quickly raised his hand in the sign of Quen. A shimmering, golden shield erected itself around him, as two flaming arrows struck the chest of the manticore.

With a resounding roar, the manticore reared back, spreading its massive wings and lashed its venomous stinger at Erland. The Witcher saw the blow coming, but as the stinger struck the shield, Erland's barrier shattered. The Witcher's breastplate buckled inward as the point of the manticore's tail plunged into his chest. A pain erupted in Erland like a blazing fire spreading through his veins. The creature ripped its tail back, rending a cavernous hole in Erland's chest, yellowish droplets oozing from the wound.

Staggering to his feet, the Witcher called upon all his resolve, gripping the silver sword in his right hand as he swayed. He could feel his body giving out. Bleeding wounds and virulent toxin were draining the strength from his limbs. As the manticore reared, tail preparing for another strike, Erland cast his hand down to the ground, summoning the sign of Yrden, and bathing the manticore in a bright purple light. As the creature's quick maneuvers slowed, Erland pushed the last of his strength into a whirling leap. He swung, his silver blade slicing into the throat of the manticore. A spray of hot blood showered down on Erland as he landed, falling to his knees, choking on the toxin working its way through his system in fiery tendrils.

A shadow fell over Erland. The manticore, pouring blood from the wound Erland had just cut, towered over him. Its good claw prepared to deliver one final blow, to take Erland into the afterlife with it. Although it was still slowed, Erland was in no shape to dodge its claw. The Witcher grimaced, straining through his constricting throat, "Vaz!"

As the world around him began to swim before his darkening vision, Erland saw Vaz, sword drawn, leaping through the air and landing on the manticore with a resounding war cry. Erland smiled as the world before him blurred and he faded into oblivion.

"Wake up, ya ploughin' bastard," Erland could feel the warm tingle of a Swallow potion working its way through his veins. Mercifully, it had replaced the scalding pain of the manticore's venom. As he opened his eyes, squinting in the light, the Witcher could see Vaz crouched over him, working a needle and thread quickly. "You need to start labeling your potions if you're gonna be relying on me to save your life. I could have given you the wrong ones, then whered we be?"

Painfully, Erland chuckled, weakly slapping Vaz's shoulder and wincing as the stitches in his chest pulled taught. "You figured it out."







# Insectoids

*You'll rarely find an insectoid alone just like you'll rarely find a single ant. There is always a nest somewhere. Once you kill one, you'll have a swarm of thorny, chitin-clad pests scuttling after you. They must be perfect for mutation though. From Dagobert Sulla to Alzur himself, mages love mutating insectoids when they shouldn't.*

—Erland of Larvik



Insectoid monsters are mostly just enormous bugs with the advantages of small bugs made huge. If you've ever tried to squash a roach, you know they are next to impossible to crush, and just when you think they're dead, off they scuttle. Now, apply that advantage to a human-sized creature, and it is more frightening than annoying. And there is no chance of stepping on any of these! Most have hard carapaces that swords slide right off, and the only place a really good shot can be landed is the soft bag-like abdomen which is often shielded.

Like regular bugs, they have sharp claws and pincers; and it is very important that you do not get grabbed and pulled into their powerful jaws. In fact, in some ways many insectoids are more like giant spiders than true insects. Like spiders, they are mostly venomous, and many also can throw webbing. An insectoid's venom can be delivered by stingers on their tails or their claws. Some are intelligent enough to spread their venom over their claws and mouths or breathe it on the opponent they have grabbed, but the most dangerous are the ones that can spit venom from a distance. If you are struggling in sticky webbing and burning from acidic venom just spat on you, you begin to wonder who is the predator and who is the prey.

Some insectoids live in colonies with specialized types: warriors, workers, drones, queens. All types are exceptionally tough and, of course, if you encounter them, they can swarm just like you kicked over an ant's nest. It's hard to believe, but most are exceptionally

fast. In some species, the warriors can command the workers and actually plan for your demise. If you are traveling through swamps or wet forests you must keep an eye out for entrances to underground nests or for egg sacs hanging from trees. If you are very close to the nest you may even have the queen on you, although she will not follow you far if you choose to retreat. It takes a great deal of food to feed a whole colony, and some have learned that near villages they always find humans or farm animals, which is why Witchers rarely have to haggle with the inhabitants.

Insectoids are often ambush hunters who can pounce, spit venom, spin webs, grab with prehensile feelers, and trample their prey. Some go dormant in the cold months but don't count on it. If they ambush you, they are usually immune to poison but susceptible to silver. If you find yourself in an area of the woods where there is nothing living but many skeletons picked clean, you may be near an insectoid nest. Of course, if you find yourself in a wood full of bleaching bones you should already be considering a different path.

I have found that some of the things people consider insectoid monsters are actually manufactured by mages. I suppose it makes sense. They are hard to kill, not terribly intelligent, and relentless in multifaceted attack. If only it were not so difficult to manufacture a creature they could then control.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Insectoid Encounters

Generally, insectoids are a good monster to use when you want to deploy a horde of monsters.

The characters could be sent into the mountains to retrieve a lost soldier, only to find that the cries for help they were following were made by a horde of **barbegazi**.

Perhaps a powerful mage manages to create a **frightener** to chase down the characters, and they have to trek through a rocky highland while avoiding their deaths.

The characters could discover that a nest of **giant centipedes** is undermining their home base and if they don't do something to stop it, the whole building will collapse in on itself.

If you want a tricky quest for a session or two, you could have the players hired to retrieve important NPCs from a village that has been overrun by multiple insectoid nests. The characters have to deal with the false voices of **barbegazi**, while dodging burrowing **giant centipedes**, and hiding from the gaze of a towering **frightener**.



Skill Base	
Athletics	7
Awareness	9
Brawling	9
Courage	9
Endurance	9
Intimidation	8
Physique	8
Resist Magic	8
Stealth	11
Wilderness Survival	9

<b>Armor</b>	3
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Slashing	
Immunities	
Freeze, Snow & Ice Conditions	

Susceptibilities	
Insectoid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	10
<b>Reposition Base</b>	7
<b>Block Base</b>	11

Bounty	
15	

Loot	
Barbegazi Fur (x1d6)	
Chitin Scale (x1d6)	



**Easy  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Superior Night  
Vision*

INT	1
REF	4
DEX	4
BODY	5
SPD	4
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	3

STUN	4
RUN	12
LEAP	2
STA	20
ENC	50
REC	4
HP	20

<b>Height</b>	1m
<b>Weight</b>	25kg
<b>Environment</b>	High mountains
<b>Organization</b>	Hives of 4 to 10

# Barbegazi

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

If yer ever travelin' through the mountains with a group of folks stay as close together as possible. Don't split up and don't let 'em leave yer line of sight. Mark my words if ya let someone go missin' and ya hear 'em callin' for help later, they might be a barbegazi. Heh, these little bug bastards can steal a person's voice by bitin' 'em from what I hear. They like to hide out in the rocks and lure folk into ambushes and whatnot. Spooky if ya ask me! Now there's an old Mahakaman trick I heard of but I can't say it works worth a troll spit. An old dwarf I met a few years back said if ya soak yer beard in ale and tie a chicken bones in there, the barbegazi can't steal yer voice.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:12)

Remain vigilant. In the mountains, any boulder could be a barbegazi. Your friend's voice could be used to deceive you, luring you into a position where you are alone and vulnerable.

When traveling the cold reaches of the Dragon Mountains of Kovir in a group, speak only when necessary, and do so using code. Preparation is key to dealing with the threat posed by barbegazi. A barbegazi can only mimic exact words that it has heard. Outsmart the barbegazi by peppering your sentences with numbers which must increase by one numeral each time someone speaks. When you hear a statement that doesn't contain the correct number in the sequence, a swarm of barbegazi is nearby. Stay together and look for a group of suspicious boulders.

When robbed of the element of surprise, barbegazi can be slain by anyone handy with a sword. Insectoid Oil only makes the job easier. Their fur can be useful, too. Stuffing three units of barbegazi fur into your clothing allows you to remain in **Snow & Ice** conditions without worrying about freezing.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	11	P	2d6+3	10	—		1
Claw Slash	11	S	1d6+5	10	—	Bleed (25%)	1

### Ability: Mimic

By taking its action, a barbegazi can mimic any voice, they have heard in the last 24 hours. The barbegazi can mimic this voice near perfectly and anyone hearing it must make a DC:16 Resist Coercion roll or be convinced. The barbegazi can only say the exact things that it heard the person it is mimicking say. If a person has never met the person the barbegazi is mimicking, they cannot roll Resist Coercion.

### Ability: Camouflage

By taking an action, a barbegazi can curl up into a ball and sit still. While in a ball, the barbegazi resembles a large rock and gains a +5 to Stealth in any area where other large rocks are present. A barbegazi can still use its Mimic ability while camouflaged.

*“Now and again students would go missing from the gauntlet outside Kaer y Seren. On the occasions we were able to find them again the story was nearly always the same. The boys had been talking too often on the trail and a nest of barbegazi had learned their voices. The next day, they had heard the voice of one of their brothers echoing out of a cavern or from the depth of the forest. Luckily, barbegazi are easily killed and the majority of our students escaped with only a few new scars to teach them the value of caution.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	9
Awareness	16
Brawling	16
Courage	—
Endurance	22
Intimidation	16
Physique	25
Resist Magic	17
Stealth	10
Wilderness Survival	15

<b>Armor</b>	30
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Piercing, Slashing, Bludgeoning	
Immunities	
Bleed, Fire, Freeze, Stun, Poison, Blinding, Fear, Charms, Extreme Heat Conditions	

Susceptibilities	
Insectoid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	15
<b>Reposition Base</b>	9
<b>Block Base</b>	17

Bounty	
2000	

Loot	
Frightener Eyes (x1d6/2)	
Frightener Claws (x1d6/3)	
Chitin Scale (x3d6)	
Infused Dust (x1d6)	
Fifth Essence (x1d6)	



**Hard  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Superior Night  
Vision*

INT	1
REF	9
DEX	7
BODY	18
SPD	8
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	6

STUN	10
RUN	24
LEAP	8
STA	60
ENC	180
REC	12
HP	120



<b>Height</b>	4.5m
<b>Weight</b>	3000kg
<b>Environment</b>	Deserts & mountains
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Frightener

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:18)

*The frightener's a tale of magic hubris if I ever heard of it. Ya see, this mage named Dagobert Sula set out to build some kinda war machine hundreds of years ago and what he came up with was the frightener. A huge ploughin' bug with a hell harder than steel plate and a temper worse than Radovid of Redania. Legend goes that he tried to destroy the thing, but it got out and started breedin' in the mountains. Now yer likely to see these things if ya travel the Blue Mountains so watch yerself! Things shell makes it damn near invincible so don't bother setting it on fire or the like! From what I hear, the trick is: the things damn near blind. If ya don't make any noise, it can't see ya!*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:20)

The frightener was originally created by the rogue mage, Dagobert Sulla, but the original was destroyed by the mage the very second after it was made. Unfortunately, Dagobert forgot to destroy his notes along with the creature. Rarely, a mage will attempt to re-create Dagobert's experiment using his notes. Even more rarely do they succeed in creating a new frightener, but whenever they do, blood is sure to flow.

The frightener was engineered to be without weakness. Luckily, Dagobert was not wholly successful in this goal. Loud, resonating noises can stun the monster and, unlike other monsters, a frightener isn't resistant to steel.

Once it's stunned, piercing its armor will still be a challenge, and you won't be able to reach up to its head with your standard sword, either. A monster like this demands a specialized tool for its slaying, something with reach and improved armor piercing. A monster hunter's crossbow enhanced with a Svarog rune would be an ideal weapon, and to accompany it, bring as much Insectoid Oil as you can carry. Eventually, after rounds of critical injuries, the frightener it will expire.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	17	S/P	8d6+4	20	—	Crushing Force, Long Reach, Knock-Down (75%)	2

### Vulnerability: Sonic Sensitivity

A frightener can be partially stunned by certain loud noises created within 10m. These noises can be created by taking one action to bang on metal shields, toss an explosive of any form, or play instruments as loudly as possible. For each source of noise within 10m, the frightener takes a -1 to its attack and defense rolls. This cumulative negative cannot lower the frightener's attack and defense bases below 8 and at the beginning of the next round, the frightener loses these penalties until the noises are created again.

### Ability: Height Advantage

A character cannot hit a frightener's head with an attack unless they are using a ranged weapon or a weapon with Long Reach. The only other chance is if the character is elevated to the same height as the frightener or it is leaning down for some reason. If none of these criteria are met and a character rolls the head location on their attack, they must roll again until a location other than the head is rolled.

### Vulnerability: Vulnerable to Steel

A frightener takes regular damage from steel weapons and is not considered resistant like other monsters.

### Ability: Camouflage

Frighteners have a +10 to Stealth in rocky or desert terrain when they aren't moving.

*"I didn't know Dagobert Sulla personally but I knew of him. I have no doubt that any beast he created would be more than a match for any lone witcher. It's a shame that his change of heart didn't include destroying his notes. I wonder how many of these creatures exist."*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	11
Awareness	8
Brawling	10
Courage	9
Endurance	9
Intimidation	8
Physique	9
Resist Magic	9
Stealth	8
Wilderness Survival	7

Armor	8
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Bleeding	

Susceptibilities	
Insectoid Oil	

Dodge Base	10
Reposition Base	11
Block Base	11

Bounty	
20	

Loot	
Giant Centipede Discharge (x2d6)	
Giant Centipede Mandibles (x1d6/3)	



**Easy  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	7
DEX	6
BODY	5
SPD	6
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	4

STUN	4
RUN	18
LEAP	3
STA	20
ENC	50
REC	4
HP	20

Height	4.5m
Weight	200kg
Environment	Forests & plains
Organization	Groups of 3 to 6

# Giant Centipede

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

Ugh, can't quite decide which I hate more: endrega or giant centipedes. They're both big bugs that travel in packs and ambush their prey. Just can't decide whether I hate endrega poppin' out of the trees or giant centipedes burrowin' up outta the ground. At least with the centipedes they got a soft under belly ya can stick a bolt in. But then again, once ya get into the brawl with an endrega ya don't gotta worry about it disappearin' into the ground and poppin' up behind ya. Here's a trick I heard though: if ya get surrounded by centipedes do yer best to make a bird call—gotta be the call of the storm petrel or it won't work, though—and it'll scare the ploughin' things off!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:10)

Giant centipedes are a disgusting nuisance all over the Continent. They ruin vineyards, make forest travel more difficult for merchants, and kill peasants like they are getting paid handsomely for the job.

As a side effect of their prevalence, much magical research is done on them, and plenty of witcher contracts are offered weekly on the pests. Because of this, much is known about them, and their bodies are always in high supply and demand.

Giant centipedes are creatures of instinct. They are blind, but the small hairs on their bodies allow them to feel even the smallest tremors in the soil. They use this sense to ambush their prey while hunting, waiting underneath the ground until they detect footsteps. In combat, they bite at nearby targets and spit acid at faraway ones. Their bellies are soft and vulnerable to attack, especially by weapons coated in Insectoid Oil. Attacking them triggers a reflex in the giant centipede to curl up into a protective coil. This move is both defensive and offensive one, as while it guards its belly, the centipede is storing energy which it will use immediately after to thrash about in a circle. Simply back up, and you won't be hurt. Bringing a method to deal with their poison is also wise.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	10	P	3d6	10	—	Poison (30%)	1

### Vulnerability: Tremor Sensitive

Giant centipedes rely on tremors to “see.” While they cannot be **blinded** by traditional means, they also cannot see anything that isn't touching the ground. This means that as long as a target is not touching the ground, the giant centipede is considered **blind** when dealing with it.

### Vulnerability: Soft Underbelly

A giant centipede's belly has only 3 points of armor leaving it more vulnerable to attack. Aiming for the belly of the giant centipede imposes a -3 penalty.

### Ability: Burrow

By taking its movement action, a giant centipede can burrow through the ground and come up 6m away. If the giant centipede takes its whole turn to move it can move up to 18m. A giant centipede can burrow through sand, dirt, and hard packed ground but it cannot burrow through solid stone.

### Ability: Protective Loop

If a giant centipede takes damage to its exposed belly it immediately curls in on itself, covering its belly and negating the ability to aim for it. At the beginning of its next turn, the giant centipede will lash out in a circle. Anyone within melee range must make a defense roll against the centipede's Bite attack roll. Anyone who fails takes damage as though they were bitten.

### Ability: Spit Acid

By taking an action, a giant centipede can roll an attack roll with a base 10 against a target within 8m to spit acid on them. If this target fails to defend, they take 2d6 damage to a random location and any armor on that location takes 1d6/2 ablation damage. If the target successfully blocks this attack, the item they used to block still takes 1d6/2 ablation damage.







# Scurrying from Tunnels

1165, Near Ban Glean

Transcribed by Killian of Belhaven

"Watch your foot," grunted Erland as he boosted Vaz into a tree, which lacked lower branches. The tip of a boot gently tapped Erland's nose before being pulled up to safety.

"Hand me my bow. It was both of your idea to stick me up here."

"At least you aren't bait. And you'll be mostly invisible to the monster here." Erland explained again, handing up the longbow with a bundle of arrows. "It can't sense you if you're off the ground."

"Real comforting."

Erland had left Bron with Nylah's merchant crew about a half mile back. Hopefully the old mare was getting well taken care of. It was the least Nylah could do after having him come off the path and into Wolf territory. Erland knew one of the Wolves would have had to clear the giant centipedes blocking this trade route sooner or later. But Nylah was impatient, and he was the only Witcher she knew. Normally, Erland would have told her to find Barmin, or Vessemir, or one of the other Wolves, but the hot-headed merchant said she needed the road cleared that week and a round-trip to Kaer Morhen would take far too long.

"It is a good plan," chuckled Nylah who stood nearby, snapping Erland out of his contemplation. "Just try not to fall."

With that, Erland got to work. He knew he didn't need to tell Vaz not to waste the few precious silver-tipped arrows he had. The Witcher applied Insectoid Oil to his blade and chose a potion from his pouch. Thunderbolt would push him to strike harder, perfect for splitting armor. He had spent the morning reminding the locals to keep people from wandering anywhere near the road until evening. Erland moved towards the area of road where the creature commonly came up. It didn't take long before one of the creatures popped up out of the ground, just behind him. Erland rolled to the side as it spat a jet of acid at him. A second centipede emerged close to where he had been before quickly arching into the air and burrowing down into the earth headfirst.

Erland bolted towards where Vaz was hidden, knowing the giant centipedes would follow. As he neared the tree, Erland threw down the sign for Yrden. Just ahead, he could see the ground crumbling slightly. As the creature emerged Erland dived and sliced into its underbelly. The creature shrieked loudly and curled up, protectively hiding its soft underbelly, blackening its veins. Erland moved fast out of the way as the centipede lashed out in a circle. Had he been closer, he would have been caught by its mandibles. But the Witcher had hunted these bugs before. Thankfully they were predictable and the venom of the Morana rune on his sword ensured the insectoid's death.

A second centipede leapt from the ground, ready to spew acid, but the glowing glyphs of Yrden caught it, slowing it to a crawl. Seizing the opportunity, Nylah dashed in and slashed with her shortsword drawing the monster's attention. Moments

later, before the creature could react, twin arrows embedded themselves into its tender stomach. Erland scanned for the third, watching the second centipede fall limp. A rumbling behind him warned him, too late, of the approaching danger. Erland went flying forward as a third centipede came up just under him. Hissing, the creature lunged at the Witcher, mandibles scratching against his breastplate. Erland rolled to the side, knocking the centipede back with a wave of force from his Aard sign. The creature burrowed into the ground where he had been and the Witcher rose to his feet. Erland moved with caution, making sure to keep within Vaz's range.

The ground erupted as three chittering centipedes emerged. A hail of acidic spit rained down onto the battlefield and Erland covered his face as he heard Nylah curse loudly. The acid sizzled and spat as it melted into Erland's armor. He'd have to get his breastplate replaced after this. Behind Erland, Nylah lashed out at the closest centipede, cutting deeply into it and slashing its face with a wicked, twisting back swing.

Erland cast his hand out and a bloom of fire erupted from his hand, engulfing the centipede that had spat at him. The creature writhed as the fire danced across its armor, mandibles clacking violently.... Erland turned to see one of the creatures retreating back underground from the rain of arrows that Vaz shot, two already protruding from its body.

There was a shriek behind him. It was the dying shrill of a centipede. The Witcher looked back to see Nylah getting to her feet from the inelegant perch she had found atop the now dead centipede.

Erland could feel himself tiring out from using so many signs. But he moved to the easiest place for his companion to get a shot and placed one last Yrden. He stomped on the ground loudly then leapt back as the last giant centipede burst from the ground, broken arrow shafts sticking out of its chitin. From the tree, Vaz fired one last arrow, striking through the eye of the wounded insect and spattering the ground in ichor.

A dying scream filled the air as it fell forward. Erland moved out of the way, looking over the five twelve-foot-long insects that now lay dead across the road. He undid his breastplate, setting it aside.

"Good work, Bait." Vaz called, climbing down from the branches gracefully "Now can we make our way to Ban Glean? I think a nice cool ale is in the cards."

As Erland cleaned his blade, he watched Nylah waving down the road towards her caravan. "I believe our Ofieri friend has plans with the corpses. If I remember correctly, Scolopendromorph mandible are very valuable on the market right now. You go on ahead. I'll make sure they don't poison themselves trying to harvest them."

"You're a saint, Gryphon," Vaz remarked sarcastically, smiling and slapping Erland on the back with a heavy thump.







# Elementa

*Elementa aren't meant to be in our realm. They're pure chaos siphoned from genies and given form on the Continent. If there's one thing you learn as a witcher, it's that pestering djinn always ends poorly. And trying to put a yolk around elemental power is far more dangerous than anyone could imagine.*

—Erland of Larvik



Elementa are not monsters, not as we know them. They are the embodiment of forces of nature summoned or created by mages. As any scholar knows, there are four other planes of existence which consist entirely of one of our four “elements”: earth, air, fire, and water. Powerful mages can open doors to these dimensions, grab great swathes of the elemental power, and use magic to form a creature from it. But the mage in question must be very powerful indeed since—like most beings—elementa do not like being told what to do.

Many lesser scholars would point to the genie as the best example of an elementa, but they are, in fact, almost in a class of their own. While genie are classified as elementa, and they are coalesced beings of magic, summoned from their native plane, these creatures hold a power far beyond the vast majority of elementa summoned by mages or found near places of power. As all magic is, in theory, derived from genie, they are capable of staggering magical feats that most mages could only ever dream of. For this reason, many mages have tried to summon and enslave genie. This has almost always proven to be a poorly conceived plan and more often than not leaves a tremendous amount of destruction and an angry genie who is now loosed on the Continent.

Most commonly, the elementa one might encounter are creatures of earth, be they earth elementals, golem, or gargoyles, and they are the result of the earth animated by magic from the plane of earth. Mud, clay, sand, or rocks clumped together and animated have the nature you would expect. They are

not particularly bright, but can't be knocked down, don't feel pain, and nothing stops them. Once created, they are perpetually loyal to their creator, and they can smash a human with a one hundred-pound fist, so they often do their mage's dirty work.

Many of these elementals are found, dormant, in elven ruins. Perhaps that is how some elven cities were built. Ancient elven magic may have been heavily oriented toward the summoning of elementals. I'm sure there were many tasks that the elves considered beneath them and an elemental, especially one of earth, never gets bored, and never lets up.

While earth magic's steady temperament makes it the easiest magic to use, elementa of other elements do exist. Water elementa are manageable, and ice elementals are similar to earth elementals. Creatures of fire on the other hand are perhaps the worst idea ever. It is said that the first fire elemental created destroyed everything for several blocks around. They attack with bursts and streams of flame and their extreme heat makes it deadly to even get close enough to strike them so often they must be fought from a distance.

The only vulnerability of many elementals is to dimeritium, the magical, or should I say, anti-magical substance that dampens magic and is used in chains and shackles to control mages.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Elementa Encounters

Generally, elementa are more forces of nature than dedicated threats. But when a mage is involved, they can become staunch enemies.

If you have a mage in your party, the characters could discover that the magical radiance of a place of power keeps moving, only to find that it is implanted into the back of an **earth elemental** that they have to defeat to use the place of power.

Perhaps Mage Hunters or Witch Hunters are tracking a renegade mage, and they summoned a **fire elemental** in self-defense only to have it get out of control and start burning down the town.

The characters could come across a village full of partially frozen corpses and have to discover who summoned the **ice elemental** and where it went.

For a particularly difficult encounter, you could have a convergence of magic where multiple elementals were summoned and are now battling.



Skill Base	
Athletics	9
Awareness	9
Brawling	10
Courage	—
Endurance	20
Intimidation	11
Physique	22
Resist Magic	13
Stealth	7
Wilderness Survival	7

<b>Armor</b>	20
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Fire	
Immunities	
Bleeding, Poison, Knock-Down, Fear, Magical Charms, Disease, Coercion	

Susceptibilities	
Elementa Oil, Dimeritium Bombs	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	12
<b>Reposition Base</b>	9
<b>Block Base</b>	14

Bounty	
1500	

Loot	
Elemental Stone (x1) Meteorite (x2d6) Chemobog Runestone (x1) Gemstone (x1d6/2)	



**Hard  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
—

INT	1
REF	6
DEX	5
BODY	13
SPD	3
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	9

STUN	10
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	55
ENC	130
REC	11
HP	110



<b>Height</b>	2.5m
<b>Weight</b>	2700kg
<b>Environment</b>	Anywhere summoned
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Earth Elemental

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

So... Elementals are kinda rare in most places. Mostly mage's summon 'em like they do with golems. From what I heard, an earth elemental's a bunch of earth magic wearin' a grand chunk of earth like a suit of armor. They ain't exactly the smartest, but I guess that's cause their just magic... energy or whatnot. Some folk say an earth elemental can be sorta tamed if ya make a stake from white oak, wrap it in corn husks and plant it in the critter. Somethin' about old magics and nature. Don't really know myself. Never seen an earth elemental and I don't think I'd try to stake the thing if I did! Heard they got control over the land: they can make spikes of rock and walls of stone and whatnot!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

Earth elementals are elementa that you'll probably encounter bound to the will of the mage who summoned them, usually as a guardian for something they need defended. They can also appear wild near an earth place of power, typically found in deep caverns.

Their bodies are naturally armored, being made of rock, and their fists are too heavy to parry. They crush people with incredible ease. Their bodies are slow, but they can make up for this by smashing the ground to send large shards of rock at crossbow speeds toward their targets. Up close, they can smash directly under them and form either a defensive ring of rock, or a jagged explosion of shards centered on themselves.

To kill one, you'll need to be able to dodge these crushing attacks, or block the shards with a large shield. While the best way to fight an earth elemental would be to use a Dimeritium Bomb, which weakens them considerably, Elementa Oil is a good substitute. You'll also want a good deal of clotting powder, to deal with the bleeding.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Punch	14	B	8d6	20	—	Crushing Force	2

### Ability: Earth Shattering Stomp

By taking its full turn, an earth elemental can stomp the ground with great force. This stomp causes a 6m long, 2m wide line of jagged stones to erupt from the ground. Everyone in the way of that line must make a reposition attempt (DC: 18) or attempt to block with a shield at the same DC. If a target fails, they take 6d6 damage to the torso, are **staggered**, and are knocked back to the end of the line. Afterwards, the stones recede into the ground.

Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Thrown Boulder

By taking its action, an earth elemental can detach a rock from its body and hurl it at a target within 10m by rolling an Athletics attack. If the target fails to defend, they take 6d6 damage to a random body location.

### Ability: Ring of Stones

By taking its full turn, an earth elemental can leap into the air. Upon landing, a ring of jagged stones erupts from the earth all around it. Everyone within melee range of the earth elemental must attempt a reposition roll (DC: 18) or attempt to block with a shield at the same DC. If a target fails, they take 4d6 damage to the torso, begin **bleeding** and are **knocked back** 2m.

Afterwards, the stones recede into the ground.

Alternatively, the earth elemental can use this ability to create a ring of 2m tall jagged rocks with a radius of 4m. This ring of stone is centered on the elemental and it requires a DC:16 Athletics check to climb. The earth elemental can dismiss these stones as an action. Otherwise they remain until something or someone does 30 points of damage to them. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

*“The last time I faced an earth elemental it was in the depths of an Elven ruin in Verden and it wasn’t even my quarry. It turned out the Sylvan I was hunting was more familiar with the ruin’s defenses than I.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	10
Awareness	9
Brawling	12
Courage	—
Endurance	18
Intimidation	11
Physique	20
Resist Magic	15
Stealth	7
Wilderness Survival	7

<b>Armor</b>	15
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Bleeding, Poison, Knock-Down, Fear, Magical Charms, Fire, Disease, Coercion	

Susceptibilities	
Elementa Oil, Dimeritium Bombs, Water Magic	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	14
<b>Reposition Base</b>	10
<b>Block Base</b>	16

Bounty	
1600	

Loot	
Elemental Stone (x1) Essence of Fire (x2d6) Dahzbog Runestone (x1) Gemstone (x1d6/2)	



### Hard Complex

Intelligence  
*Feral*

Senses  
—

INT	1
REF	7
DEX	6
BODY	11
SPD	5
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	9

STUN	10
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	50
ENC	100
REC	10
HP	100

<b>Height</b>	2.5m
<b>Weight</b>	2700kg
<b>Environment</b>	Anywhere summoned
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Fire Elemental

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

Spotted a fire elemental on the battlefield in the last war! Made me glad I was an arbalist and not a frontline fighter! The thing was chargin' through the rank and file soldiers like a wildfire in a dry Redanian forest. Heh, poor bastards never stood a chance. Personally, saw the thing take its great spiky fist and crush the head of a chargin' horse in one swing! Then the poor critter's body just burst into flames! Heard somewhere that fire elementals burn souls to replenish their magic. Every person they kill gets all bottled up in their chest like kindlin' in a furnace and when the beast starts wearin' down it burns 'em all and starts glowin' bright again....

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

The magic ritual that summons a fire elemental from outside our reality and binds it to the caster's will is a complicated one, achievable by only the most skilled of mages.

Fire elementals are aggressive, as is typical of fire magic, and are summoned by mages for the purpose of destroying their foes, for which they are extremely proficient. Mages of a certain skill always seem to end up with foes that need destroying.

Rarely, near the rim of an active volcano or at the heart of a desert, a wild fire elemental might be found.

The easiest way to fight a fire elemental is to apologize to the mage you've angered. If that ship has already sailed, you have an uphill battle ahead of you.

Attacking a fire elemental from a distance is a dangerous proposition. They are capable of summoning lines of fire from the earth at a significant distance and are faster than their brethren, allowing them to close the distance more quickly. Once you close with a fire elemental you'll have to deal with the aura of intense heat that emanates from their body. Any ice, water, or wind spell will do the trick, as will a Dimeritium Bomb. Once their flames have been dampened, you'll be able to approach it to attack without getting singed by this aura. Keep in mind that its fists are too heavy to be blocked or parried, so you'll need to dodge and it is capable of summoning a ring of fire around itself. Finally, try not to let the mage you've angered cast a fire spell on the elemental, as it will reignite its aura and heal its wounds.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Punch	16	B	5d6	20	—	Crushing Force, Fire (50%)	2

### Vulnerability: Dampen Flames

After being hit with an ice, water, or wind-based attack, the fire elemental's Furnace Aura Ability is negated for 1d6 rounds. At the end of this time, the aura returns at the beginning of the fire elemental's turn.

### Ability: Fire Powered

If a fire-based spell is cast on a fire elemental, the elemental is healed for half the damage it would have taken and gains a +2 bonus to all of its rolls for 3 rounds. If the fire elemental has been dampened by an ice, water or wind-based attack, its furnace aura returns immediately.

### Ability: Flaming Stomp

By taking its full turn, a fire elemental can stomp the ground with great force. This stomp causes a 6m long, 2m wide line of fire to erupt from the ground. Everyone in the way of that line must make a reposition roll (DC: 17). If a target fails, they take 5d6 damage to the torso and are lit on **fire**. Afterwards, the line of fire dissipates. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Furnace Aura

A fire elemental radiates an aura of intensive heat. When within 2m of a fire elemental a character takes penalties as if it were in **Extreme Heat** Conditions. If a creature starts its turn within melee range of a fire elemental, they have a 50% chance of catching **fire**.

### Ability: Ring of Fire

By taking its full turn, a fire elemental can leap into the air. Upon landing, the fire elemental slams its fist into the ground creating an explosion of fire around itself. Everyone within melee range of the fire elemental must attempt a reposition roll (DC: 17). If a target fails, they take 5d6 damage to the torso and are lit on **fire**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.



Skill Base	
Athletics	9
Awareness	9
Brawling	10
Courage	—
Endurance	20
Intimidation	11
Physique	22
Resist Magic	13
Stealth	7
Wilderness Survival	7

<b>Armor</b>	20
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Bleeding, Poison, Knock-Down, Fear, Magical Charms, Freeze, Disease, Coercion	

Susceptibilities	
Elementa Oil, Dimeritium Bombs, Fire	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	14
<b>Reposition Base</b>	10
<b>Block Base</b>	15

Bounty	
1600	

Loot	
Elemental Stone (x1) Essence of Water (x2d6) Zoria Runestone (x1) Gemstone (x1d6/2)	



**Hard  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
—

INT	1
REF	6
DEX	5
BODY	13
SPD	3
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	9

STUN	10
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	55
ENC	130
REC	11
HP	110



<b>Height</b>	2.5m
<b>Weight</b>	2700kg
<b>Environment</b>	Anywhere summoned
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Ice Elemental

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

*Never seen an ice elemental in the flesh. Can't say I know how common they are. I heard from a wise woman in Mag Turga, they form outta frozen lake up in the mountains and roam down into the foothills lookin' for places of power to make 'em stronger. Don't really know why though. From what I've heard they're plenty strong enough! Ya'd think you could just melt 'em with fire but their sturdy and they ain't easy to melt. An ice elemental's fist'll put a hole in a sheet of steel and they can summon shards of ice and such. The old wise woman was even sayin' the most powerful one can transform their bodies into tidal waves of water and then freeze themselves solid 'round their prey!*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

Ice Elementals are rarely summoned by mages unless their current environment would play to the elemental's strengths. It is for this reason that if you do see one, you'll likely have an unfair fight on your hands. Try to stay away from frozen lakes if you value your life.

Like other elementals, ice elementals are heavy and slow, and rely on their fists and large sweeping attacks in combat. Unlike other elementa, however, their attacks are capable of freezing you in place, which will make it very difficult to dodge the monster's next heavy fist. Stay as far away from them as you can, and you won't fall victim to the ring of freezing ice it can summon by slamming the ground around it.

Fire is by far the best way to fight one, ideally from range. If you don't have a mage with you to cast more powerful fire magic, try Igni, but get away from the elemental right after. Dimeritium Bombs and Elementa Oil are also recommended, and if you can get your hands on them, they increase your chance of survival significantly.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Punch	15	B	8d6	20	—	Crushing Force, Freeze (50%)	1

### Ability: Ice Wave Stomp

By taking its full turn, an ice elemental can stomp the ground with great force. This stomp causes a 4m cone of jagged ice to erupt from the ground. Everyone in the way of that cone must make a reposition roll (DC: 17). If a target fails, they take 6d6 damage to the torso and are **frozen**. Afterwards, the cone of ice dissipates.  
Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Ring of Ice

By taking its full turn, an ice elemental can leap into the air. Upon landing, a ring of jagged ice erupts from the earth all around it. Everyone within melee range of the ice elemental must attempt a reposition roll (DC: 17). If a target fails, they take 6d6 damage to the torso and are **frozen**. Afterwards, the ring of ice dissipates.  
Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Freeze Liquid

By taking its action, an ice elemental can touch a body of water and cause an area with a 4m radius to freeze solid. If a creature in the area has a Leap stat high enough to let them escape the area, they may make a reposition roll (DC: 16) to escape that area of water before it freezes. If they fail or their Leap would not get them out of the area, the target is unable to move or take actions until they can make a DC: 18 Physique check or until someone does 10 points of damage to the ice. Any creature trapped underneath the ice who needs to breathe air begins **suffocating**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

*“There were a few ice elementals in the Dragon Mountains. It seems the snowy peaks, especially near the coastline, created an excellent confluence of water magic. When they aren't created with a purpose in mind these embodiments of magical force can be interesting to watch. At a distance, of course.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# Wildfire

## 1154, Gors Velen Transcribed Killian of Belhaven

Towers with pointed roofs dotted the inside of the walled city of Gors Velen. The view of the sea and the bustling docks would have been picturesque on any other day. Erland normally would have made his way here later in the summer, if he had a choice, but Nylah had summoned him for urgent matters concerning mages and monsters. She sat astride her horse, looking fiercely excited to be so close as her short brown hair fluttered around her face in the wind.

"Well, it's not burning down yet," Vaz commented.

Nylah tsked him and said, "Rayli has to be here. She is too recognizable for our witnesses to have been wrong. You know how sorceresses can be."

Vaz sighed. "Unless they're also part of this damned rebellion. I swear, Falka's whipped the whole north up into a ploughin' mob. Wouldn't be surprised if this 'magician's' just some countess running from her servants."

Nylah gave him a chiding look. "She's not just a countess. She's a dangerous magician, and she's already been responsible for many deaths. She's burned down three villages in the last six weeks, and if we don't stop her, she's going to burn down the greatest port in the north. Gors Velen is a hub of culture and trade and we can't risk Rayli turning it to ash." She spurred her horse on boldly towards the city.

As the trio entered the city gates, they were welcomed by the screaming of a large crowd fleeing the docks. Erland leapt to his horse and spurred her forward into the rising chaos. Vaz and Nylah were close to follow. Swiftly they found the cause of the commotion. Rayli stood, with copper curls bouncing in the burning breeze, in the center of the market square. Not far from her, a towering fire elemental had just smashed its mace-like fist into the last of the market's guards, knocking him from his feet in a burst of flame. Already charred corpses littered the ground and stalls burned miserably, emitting choking smoke. Rayli looked to be in the middle of casting another spell, hands glowing with a red light.

Erland started to rush forward but paused as a crow-feather arrow whizzed by him, piercing into the magician's shoulder and ripping her attention away from the spell. Eyes widened in crazed anger, Rayli glanced to the trio approaching her. As her eyes met Erland's, he could see recognition and fear. The sorceress leapt over the charred corpses around her feet and dashed towards a nearby dock house.

"Get the elemental, Erland!" Nylah called as she swung off her horse and ran after the mage, drawing her favored shortsword. "I got this wild cat!"

Vaz swiftly moved to follow Nylah, notching another arrow. "I'll make sure she doesn't get herself killed."

Erland nodded as he dismounted, gulping down a Thunderbolt potion and pulling a crystal-clear vial of Talgar's tears from his pouch. Erland charged, throwing the vial at the fire elemental. The titan barely realized its danger before the vial

exploded on its chest, dousing its flames and stiffening its body. Safe from its furnace aura, Erland twirled in to slash as hard as he could. Several powerful blows smashed against the elemental's hard stone exterior before the Witcher was forced to leap away as the effect of the concoction wore off and the flames surrounding the creature burst back to life. Erland had just dove out of range when the monster smashed its fists into the ground, summoning an explosion of fire around itself. Erland pulled out a second vial as the behemoth ran towards him, waiting for his chance. Its mace-like hands swung for Erland like a battering ram but instinct and reflex kept him just out of the elemental's way. The stall that had been behind Erland before he had moved was now rubble, beginning to blaze with newly kindled fire. Erland took a few steps back before throwing the vial in, then rushing it again to attack it while it was at its most vulnerable. Moments later, the Witcher felt the wave of heat, as the elemental's flaming core restarted. He could feel his armor growing hotter and hotter, noticing the corpse of a once-merchant catch fire next to the elemental. He threw up his free hand in the sign of Aard, sending a blast of force smashing into the elemental, dampening its flame before Erland himself could catch fire. Roaring, the elemental stomped one massive foot into the ground in his direction, and fire burst from the ground in a line careening towards him. Diving aside, Erland readied himself for his next assault.

From the nearby building he heard angry shouting. He hoped his young friend would not be too brash in her decisions when fighting the cornered mage. With luck, Vaz could handle the situation if it got out of hand. The elemental took the moment of distraction to charge in closer than Erland wanted, pieces of his armor catching fire. Erland raised his hand to cast the sign of Quen but moments too late. The full force of the elemental's fist struck Erland, denting his breastplate inward and sending a shower of sparks flying. Erland threw himself backwards as the second fist arced through the air aiming for his head. The Witcher rolled to his feet, putting out the flames as fast as possible.

A scream of agony told Erland that the fight in the dock house was nearly over. Erland pirouetted around the line of fire flowing towards him and ran in, striking as hard as he could to do the final damage necessary to break the elemental's body. Fire burst from the titan's chest as its arms waved frantically. As its life force sizzled to a stop, Erland moved in, ripping the Dazhbog Runestone from its core with a gloved hand.

"Oh, Erland! We'll need to give you a haircut. It's singed at the ends," The Witcher heard the muted notes of pain in Nylah's voice and turned to see her raising a hand to cover her nose, trying not to jostle the newly applied bandages covering her side. "And you smell something awful."

Vaz stepped up beside Erland, buffing singed leather off his doublet. "We took care of the mage, now for the fire."







# Relicts

*I've hunted relicts all across the Continent, and it's always an interesting experience. It's hard to lure a relict out of its home. I always wind up in some remote part of the wilderness. If it's a godling or a doppler I'll do my best to negotiate with them. If it's a leshen or a shaelmaar, it's my silver blade against a force of nature.*

—Erland of Larvik



You will probably never see a relict monster like leshen, fiends, or dopplers. You may think they are but fireside stories to tell children. In truth, they are rare and usually live in dark primeval forests, treacherous bogs, and swamps. These are the last places left to them with little human interference. Most belong to the land they inhabit and do not stray far from it. When resources are scarce, some protect their land by forming a relationship with the nearby villages. They fertilize fields or teach the villagers how to hunt in the forest, while others protect their territory by killing anyone who enters. Life is easier for the larger relicts who can easily kill any invaders and can rule their territory as long as no witcher comes by, but the smaller varieties must usually hide out. When civilization gets too close, these timid creatures retreat. Unfortunately, these are usually the guardian spirits who protect the villages. When they leave, frequently the lumberjacks move in and more of the wilderness is lost.

No one knows the origins of most relicts. From what we do know, they were on the Continent before humans, before elves, and before dwarves. The largest of them are powerful, strong, and able to heal themselves. Many have magic, but it is not the magic of mages, but an older magic tied into the land. More than one kind can change shape, and at least one I know of can teleport. Some can scry and see the future while others can control plants and animals. Many scholars speculate that these are not Post-Conjunction monsters, but

a shadow of a world before even the gnomes arrived. Some are worshiped by ignorant villagers as gods, which is just as well because they will not come too close to their gods and their offerings may please the relict.

Many relicts take a form that combines human characteristics with those of animals. They often have yellow eyes and horns or antlers. If one is unlucky enough to encounter a relict, you must beware of woodland creatures and even plants that may be under its control. You are wise not to look directly into its face. Stay alert and watch out in case the creature charges. The largest and strongest can easily knock down a human on horseback. If you must attack, it is best to wait until they have charged, step out of the way, and attack from the side. For many, fire is their greatest vulnerability, but they also are resistant to steel. There are prankster relicts who are considered harmless to humans, but these are the rarest of their kind.

Most relicts are intelligent. They should be thought of as remnants of elder races. If they have survived until now, when the vran and the werebbubbs are all but gone, it speaks well for their survival, as long as there are primeval places left. On the other hand, some appear to be immortal creatures with magics that are woven throughout the wilderness. They are the dark presence that lurks at the edges of humanity.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Relict Encounters

Relicts are generally intelligent creatures with their own agenda, which makes for interesting NPCs, but they can be raging monsters and forces of nature as well.

The characters could come to a village where the villagers ran out a family of **godlings** and now the **godlings** are getting their revenge by haunting the village with vermin, and nightmares, and beasts.

Perhaps the characters are forced to travel deep into a primordial forest to find an ancient ruin, and along the way they find out they are in the territory of a **leshen**. Do they fight the **leshen** or try to sneak around it to the ruin and escape?

The characters could wind up trapped deep underground thanks to teleportation or a ruin's gateway, having to deal with **shaelmaar** who are right at home in the pitch-black caverns.

If you want a more difficult plotline, you could have the characters sent to kill a **leshen** who has already built many totems and is connected to a local village full of honest, hard-working people.



Skill Base	
Athletics	15
Awareness	12
Brawling	6
Charisma	14
Courage	9
Endurance	8
Human Perception	12
Intimidation	6
Persuasion	13
Physique	5
Resist Coercion	14
Resist Magic	9
Sleight of Hand	13
Stealth	16
Wilderness Survival	16

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Relict Oil, Dimeritium Bombs	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	13
<b>Reposition Base</b>	15
<b>Block Base</b>	8

Bounty	
20	

Loot	
Godling Eyes (x1d6/3)	
Mundane Items (x1d6)	
Strange Items (x1d6)	



**Easy  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	4
REF	8
DEX	9
BODY	3
SPD	8
EMP	7
CRA	4
WILL	5

STUN	4
RUN	24
LEAP	4
STA	20
ENC	30
REC	4
HP	20

<b>Height</b>	1m
<b>Weight</b>	22kg
<b>Environment</b>	Near settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or pairs

# Godling

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

If ya've never lived in a tiny village in the middle of nowhere ya probably never heard of a godling in yer life. Heh, they ain't exactly as common these days as they used to be. Heard there used to be tons of these little guys roamin' around the north. They're nature spirits or house guardians or somethin'. Point is, they like to hang around little hamlets and take care of the people in 'em. They'd fix shoes and patch roofs and whatnot. But as I hear it, when folk started buildin' proper cities, the godlings got jealous and started turnin' on people. They'd lead plague carryin' rats into people's stores, undermine foundations and eat people's pets!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:12)

A godling is harmless, unless offended. Unlike many monsters, it can speak the common tongue, and can thus be reasoned with, which is recommended.

If treated properly, offered food scraps, and the occasional castoff tool, mostly as a sign of respect, a godling can become a productive member of a small village. They are great with livestock because they can even speak their languages, and will often do the jobs that none of the other villagers want to do.

Unfortunately, respect is sometimes a rare commodity in the Continent. When offended, a godling can quickly become a nuisance. They can spoil your food, give you nightmares, and even convince wild animals to attack you, all from hiding.

If you must, a godling can be driven off by burning burdock and waving it around the settlement that it has become attached to. Killing a godling is equal parts pointless, easy, and inhumane. The only real reason do such a thing would be to gather its eyes for an alchemical reagent, but even then, there are substitutes.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Punch	8	B	1d6-2	5	—	—	1

### Vulnerability: Burdok Weakness

Burdock is poisonous to godlings. If burdock gets into the bloodstream of a godling (via a burdock-coated weapon or ingestion) the godling becomes **poisoned** and must succeed at an Endurance check (DC:18) to end the condition. A godling also cannot stand the smell of burdock and must make an Endurance check (DC:14) to remain in within 20m of burning burdock.

### Ability: Smell of the Wood

A godling goes largely un-noticed by the other monsters and wildlife in the area. Unless a godling actively irritates or attacks a monster or creature, the monster or creature ignores the godling.

### Ability: Spoil Food

By taking its action, a godling can cause an amount of food and drink no larger than 1 square meter to go rotten. Anyone who consumes this food must make an Endurance check (DC:18) or be **nauseated**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Speak With Animals

A godling can communicate basic idea to beasts and other animals. This allows the godling to give basic commands to animals, using Persuasion as if it were speaking with another sapient creature. The animals can resist the persuasion with their Resist Magic. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Weave Nightmares

By taking its full turn, a godling can weave nightmares into the mind of their sleeping target. These nightmares are frighteningly real and the target cannot tell them from reality until they awaken. The target regains no Hit Points or Stamina from sleeping and reduces their maximum Stamina to half until they can get sleep. The halving of Stamina is cumulative but it cannot lower the target's Stamina below 5. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.



Skill Base	
Athletics	12
Awareness	16
Brawling	16
Courage	19
Endurance	17
Hex Weaving	17
Intimidation	15
Physique	18
Resist Coercion	17
Resist Magic	18
Stealth	18
Wilderness Survival	17

Armor	16
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
Slashing	
Immunities	
Magical Charm	

Susceptibilities	
Relict Oil, Fire, Dimeritium Bombs, Moondust Bombs	

Dodge Base	16
Reposition Base	12
Block Base	18

Bounty	
1500	

Loot	
Leshen Resin (x1d6)	
Leshen Fiber (x2d6)	
Crystalized Essence (x1d6/2)	
Leshen Bone (x2d6)	



**Hard  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	7
REF	9
DEX	9
BODY	12
SPD	5
EMP	4
CRA	2
WILL	10

STUN	10
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	55
ENC	120
REC	11
HP	110

Height	2.5m
Weight	136kg
Environment	Deep forests
Organization	Solitary

# Leshen

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

*Only seen a leshen once in my life. Didn't know what it was at the time, though! Heh, here I am runnin' a load of bolts down to the front and my cart passes into the deep woods. I hear this bugglin' and right there, just past the trees is this huge...thing. Folk say the leshen's the forest made livin'. It hates poachers and lumberjacks and foragers more than anything and if ya enter a leshen's wood you'll get speared on roots and made into some sorta magic totem. If ya gotta fight a leshen ya gotta come in with some fire at hand. They're all made of wood so they'll go up like a barn fulla straw! Don't count on a long celebration though. Leshen are immortal. Ya can't kill 'em without burnin' down the forest.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:15)

Leshen rule over the primeval forests of the Continent. Their magic allows them to command the plants and animals of their domain to do their bidding. Because of this, fighting a leshen is like fighting the forest itself. From the very moment you enter the forest, you are in danger. Reaching the monster itself means surviving several animal attacks. After expending its resources, at the heart of the forest, you'll find the monster itself.

In combat, leshen are slow, but their claws are deadly. They are a tricky foe, capable of turning to smoke to elude you and entangling you with roots. A combination of Moondust Bombs and fire are needed to gain an advantage in the fight. The older the leshen, the more likely it is to have several totems hidden around its forest. Each totem makes the leshen more powerful, and having even one totem allows it to restore its health quickly should it escape you. Ancient leshen have five totems. Additionally, having a totem allows the leshen to link itself to a human in a community nearby its forest. As long as the link is not severed by distance, the leshen can return to life if slain.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	18	S	7d6	20	—	—	2

### Ability: Create Totem

By taking a month, a leshen can create a magic totem in its area of wilderness. This totem has 20 points of health and is vulnerable to fire. While within a mile of their totem, a leshen gains a +1 to their attack and defense and can summon wolves and ravens as an action rather than a full turn. A leshen can create up to 5 totems and the bonus to their attack and defense is cumulative.

Secondarily, given 1 hour, undisturbed, a leshen with at least one totem can drain the collective life forces of villagers who live within 50 miles of its totem. It regenerates all of its health but all the damage it regenerated is split amongst the town folk as unmodified damage which armor does not stop.

Finally, a leshen with at least 1 totem can put a black magic curse on a person it has done damage to within the last day. The target must roll a Resist Magic check against the leshen's Hex Weaving check. If the target fails, they are linked to the leshen. As long as that person remains within 50 miles of the leshen's totem the leshen will be reborn the next morning at sunrise every time it dies.

### Ability: Root Strike

By taking its full turn, a leshen can dig its hands into the ground and command the roots to strike in a 2m radius area within 20m of the leshen. Anything in that area must make a reposition check (DC:17). If the reposition action would not cover enough ground to get out of the area, the defense fails. Alternatively they can block with a shield at the same DC. If they fail to defend, the target takes 6d6 damage to the torso and is knocked back 4m. If the target successfully blocked, they must make a DC:18 Physique check or still be knocked back 4m. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Smoke Teleportation

By taking its full turn, a leshen can transform its body into a cloud of smoke and ravens and travel up to 15m. While in this form, the leshen is considered **Incorporeal**. Moondust Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Command Animals

By taking an action, a leshen can command animals within 30m of it. Any animal that lives within the forest of the leshen immediately obeys its commands and will fight to the death for it. Any animal brought into the forest must make a Resist Magic check (DC:18) or risk coming under the leshen's command. The command is released when the leshen dies or the animal moves more than 30m from the leshen. When the animal comes back within 30m of the leshen they must resist again.

Secondarily, by taking their full turn, a leshen can summon 3 wolves to act as its servants. These wolves enter the scene immediately and act after the leshen. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.



Skill Base	
Athletics	8
Awareness	13
Brawling	12
Courage	15
Endurance	18
Intimidation	10
Physique	20
Resist Magic	14
Stealth	12
Wilderness Survival	8

<b>Armor</b>	20
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Slashing	
Immunities	
Knock-Down, Blinding	

Susceptibilities	
Relict Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	14
<b>Reposition Base</b>	8
<b>Block Base</b>	15

Bounty	
500	

Loot	
Shaelmaar Dust (x1d6)	
Shaelmaar Hair (x1d6)	
Chitin Scale (x2d6)	
Stone (x1d6)	



**Medium  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
—

INT	1
REF	6
DEX	4
BODY	12
SPD	5
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	5

STUN	8
RUN	15
LEAP	3
STA	40
ENC	120
REC	8
HP	80



<b>Height</b>	2m
<b>Weight</b>	2000kg
<b>Environment</b>	Mountains & caves
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Shaelmaar

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:15)

*Dwarves have plenty of tales about shaelmaar! Heh, not sure how many are true but they're all interestin'. In the southern Mahakams, they say the haelmaar's a spirit of the earth and it patrols the underground to keep folk from diggin' up gold and jewels. They can even make themselves look like dwarves from what I hear! Heh, not sure about that one. Only time I ever saw a shaelmaar it was bringin' down the roof of a mine with its great hulkin' claws! Didn't exactly look like a clever old spirit to me! But spirit or not ya gotta watch for shaelmaar. They pop up outta the ground without warnin' and their armor's harder than steel.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

Shaelmaar are hulking subterranean beasts encased in thick chitin that are rarely seen, as they live deep underground in tunnels and caverns scraped out of the earth by their thick claws. When they do crawl out of their burrows, they have been known to eat miners and villagers many before returning to the earth.

Totally adapted to a life underground, shaelmaar are blind, but possess acute hearing and echolocation. If you find yourself facing a shaelmaar you can temporarily escape its wrath by standing still or moving gently.

Once engaged with its prey, a shaelmaar can curl their bodies into a ball and spin rapidly to create tremors that can be indistinguishable from a powerful earthquake. Above ground, shaelmaar prefer to attack creatures in melee range but can use their tremendous strength and connection to the earth to smash their claws into the ground, creating lines of jagged rock to burst from the ground. Perhaps the most well documented of the shaelmaar's offenses is their ability to roll into a ball to hurl themselves at their enemies, crushing them under their weight.

This is the time when a prepared individual, usually a witcher, can strike a blow to turn the tide of battle in their favor. When the shaelmaar charges, stand in front of something hard and immobile, like a tree, and get out of the way at the last moment. After the resulting impact, find the monster's soft belly with a weapon coated in Relict Oil.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Claw Slash	15	S	5d6+2	20	—	—	2

### Vulnerability: Blind

Shaelmaar are completely blind and automatically fail any Awareness check that requires them to see. They distinguish targets by hearing them and sensing vibration in the ground. If a target remains completely still and makes no noise, they become invisible to the shaelmaar. While engaged in melee with a target they take no penalties from this blindness as they can hear the target moving. If a target within 10m moved or made noise in the previous round, the shaelmaar knows where the person is.

### Ability: Rolling Charge

When its target is more than 5m away, a shaelmaar can take its full turn to curl into a ball and roll at a target within 10m, making an attack at a base of 13 that does 8d6 damage and knocks the target back 6m. If the target strikes anything while flying, they take ramming damage as if from a horse. The target must reposition to defend against the rolling charge. If the shaelmaar fails to hit with this attack it stops 10m from where it started. If it strikes anything while moving, it is **stunned** for one round and becomes **prone**, opening its belly up.

### Vulnerability: Soft Underbelly

A shaelmaar's underbelly is unarmored and has no resistance to slashing. Aiming for the shaelmaar's underbelly is impossible unless you are underneath the shaelmaar, it is on its back or side, or it has failed its rolling charge. In those cases, aiming for the underbelly incurs a -3 penalty.

### Ability: Tremor Spin

A shaelmaar can use its action to curl up into an armored ball and spin at high speed, shooting out debris in an area with a 6m radius and throwing out chunks of earth. Anyone in this area must make a DC: 17 Athletics check or be knocked **prone** and forced to make a Stun Save.

### Ability: Earth Shattering Smash

By taking its full turn, a shaelmaar can slam the earth and causes a 6m long, 2m wide line of jagged stones to erupt from the ground. Everyone in the way of that line must make a reposition check (DC:18) or attempt to block with a shield at the same DC. If a target fails, they take 6d6 damage to the torso, are **staggered**, and are knocked back to the end of the line. Afterwards, the stones recede into the ground.

### Ability: Burrowing

By taking its movement action, a shaelmaar can burrow through the ground at a speed of 4m per round. If the shaelmaar takes its whole action to move it can move up to 8m. A shaelmaar can burrow through sand, dirt, and hard packed ground but it cannot burrow through solid stone. If a shaelmaar burrows out of the ground underneath a target, they must make a DC:12 Athletics roll or fall **prone**.







# Undermining

## 1123, Mahakam

### Transcribed Killian of Belhaven

"It's been collapsing tunnels." Erland looked to the short-bearded speaker.

"Worse; it's been eatin' miners," another dwarf gruffly added.

"Yer supposed to be a monster hunter, so ye can handle et, can't ye?" A third dwarf chimed.

Erland looked over the dwarves then back at his ale. "I can. Where has it been collapsing tunnels?"

"Southeastern branch. T' the east by half-a-day. if yer walking."

"We'll pay the goin' rates for the service." The second dwarf groomed his full black beard with thick fingers as he spoke.

"But only if we see proof the deed was done!" The first dwarf added quickly.

Erland downed his drink and moved to stand; the dwarves backed out of his way. "I'll do it. Just make sure no one comes after me. A shaelmaar can cause quite a bit of collateral damage."

Erland moved quietly down the long tunnel following the directions on the dwarves' rough map. Already, a thick layer of Relict Oil shined along the silver blade in his hand. The Witcher downed a Cat potion as the light of the miners' torches began to fade behind him. Trying to keep a torch alive during a fight would be more hassle than it was worth. In moments, Erland's vision desaturated to shades of gray, and the world was thrown into contrast, letting him see the jagged walls and fallen stones of the mine.

Deeper in the tunnels, he found a large cave scattered with turned earth and broken mining tools. It would be the best place for him to fight the monster. Erland would need the room to move around if this really was a shaelmaar. He sat on a large boulder and closed his eyes to meditate. It wouldn't be long before the creature returned to search for more miners.

Soon enough, his ears perked at the sound of grating; a large form burrowing up from below. The Witcher rose to his feet, the blade in his hand ready. Quietly, he pounced on the beast as it crawled into the room. The lumbering creature turned, startled, and let out a screech as Erland's blade slashed across its stony outer shell. Swiftly, it unfurled and slashed for him, its pincer-like claws ripping through the air in front of Erland. The hunter backed up, circling the creature, looking for an opening in its chitin to no avail.

Enraged, the shaelmaar curled its body and rolled Erland like a tumbling boulder. The Witcher leapt to the side, but just a second too late, feeling the body of the shaelmaar clash against his side, sending him sprawling to the ground. He groaned as he landed flat on his back several meters away. The shaelmaar squealed again, using its echolocation to find the Witcher. Erland was glad the creature was blind as he hurried to his

feet. The moment it had to use echolocation gave him enough time to rise and reassess the situation.

The shaelmaar raised its hands and struck the ground with massive force. Rocks exploded from the ground in a line towards Erland. The Witcher whirled out of the way, maneuvering himself between the shaelmaar and a sturdy-looking dwarven minecart. Predictably, the shaelmaar barreled at him again, but this time he was ready. Erland moved out of the way and the beast rolled too fast into the cart behind him. The impact smashed the wood and steel cart to pieces and the shaelmaar tumbled backwards to land on its back, exposing its tender belly. Erland rushed in and slashed hard into the vulnerable skin, earning a gout of blood and an ear-piercing screech from the beast.

Erland continued his barrage on the beast as it got to its feet. With another ear-pierce screech, the creature curled in on itself, forcing the witcher to retreat. The ground began to rattle and shake as the shaelmaar began to spin, faster and faster, rocks spraying around it. Erland did his best to plant his feet and cover his face as shards of rock glanced off him, a few denting his armor slightly.

After a moment, the creature stopped with a roll away across the room. Its head moved as it listened for the Witcher. Erland positioned himself in front of a wall and whistled. The shaelmaar screeched in rage and rolled straight for him. Erland twirled out of the way and slashed for where the beast would land. His blade hit true as the beast lay vulnerable once again on its back. He stabbed his sword in and rent it down, slicing the beast open. It tried to claw for him pathetically from its back, but Erland twisted the blade in its gut. The creature squalled as its body shuddered, falling limp.

The Witcher withdrew his blade and severed the head. He collected the hair and dust from the shaelmaar then the chitin scale. He could find uses for those. After cleaning his blade and resheathing it, he headed back towards the entrance of the mine.

Upon reaching the tavern again, he spotted the dwarves. Erland hefted the bag with the head in it. Pulling out a monster's head had upset people in the past. He set the bag on the table in front of them. Erland looked at the three. One of the dwarves grumbled and elbowed his friend. "We gotta pay him."

The dwarf who had offered the going rate paled and said, "Since it was a community problem, we should all pitch in, right?"

"EH! Don't be cheap, Zhamner. You offered ta pay!" The other dwarf elbowed his friend as well.

Zhamner protested, "Just because it's a job for 'im. We dinna wanna have 'im walkin' away and leavin' us with a monster problem, did we?"

The oldest looking of the dwarves sighed. "You owe us." And pulled out a bag of coin.







# Ogroids

*Ogroids are usually the least of my worries. Most of them are harmless, as long as you keep your distance. But every now and again a nekker tribe settles a cave outside a human village or a group of loggers wander into a cyclops' territory. It's nearly impossible to reason with an ogroid that's not a troll, so it usually comes down to the blade.*

—Erland of Larvik



Ogroids occupy an uncomfortable place in our study. They are monsters that are not quite human but in some ways they are very similar. Some may have enormous feet, some may have a single eye, but they all are recognizable as like humans. In many cases the difference is simply scale. Giants, trolls, ogres, are like us but huge. Many also have a recognizable intelligence even if it is very primitive. In fact as their occurrence become ever more rare, our fear of them has decreased, and we are learning to live with some of the ogroids.

Their size is their greatest attribute. It intimidates humans, even those with weapons and armor. If it were not for their size their punching, stomping, charging attacks might be no more powerful than ours. Due to their great strength and size witchers frequently cannot parry their blows but must dodge and roll to avoid being flattened. A creature that can pick up a horse and fling it is in an entirely different class of attacker. Some say that the very largest class of ogroids, the giants, may already be extinct.

Then there is the question of their intelligence. Most ogroids can use language even if it may be primitive. Many types have learned to use the common speech. Those that do not may simply be the ones that live so remotely as to only rarely encounter humans. Being able to communicate with people may be the key to survival for ogroids. Those smaller than giants can use their power for more useful things like building and repairing bridges. Trolls are hired to guard things and compete in fighting competitions. Their desire for vodka, which

they receive from humans in return for their help, is often greater than their attraction for eating human flesh. When seen close up in these cooperative situations we see how similar ogroid social life is to ours. They marry, they bicker, they get drunk, they barter, they hold grudges. As they stay in close contact with us I suspect they will act more and more like us. If I were a tailor I would see this as a big opportunity.

Ogroids that have not made their peace with humans are fierce warriors and more than happy to eat people. Extremely accurate rock throwing is common among trolls and creatures like knockers who are can also run as fast as a horse. No, keep moving so the rocks don't get you, and dodge the charge so you can attack it from its unprotected sides. They are susceptible to silver but their skin is so thick that it may take a while before they notice your strikes. Remember that in some the skin of the back is extra thick and rugged, while attacking from the front is walking into its vice-like grip.

The smaller ogroids, not being as formidable, tend to be social and attack in numbers. While most ogroids use simple or crudely fashioned tools, these smaller types, perhaps because of their social nature, even think far enough to plan simple traps and ambushes.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Ogroid Encounters

Ogroids are in many ways much like humans. They can be used in many situations where you might normally use human encounters.

Perhaps as the characters are resting for the night, a **cyclops** steals away their mounts for its dinner. The players could try to kill the **cyclops**, but it would be easier to sneak into its lair and steal the horses back.

While deep in dwarven mountains, the characters could be hired to deal with a specter haunting the mine only to find that the "specter" is really a group of **knockers** playing tricks on the miners.

The characters could wind up having to contend with a **troll** bounty hunter who captures or kills criminals for the local alderman in return for vodka and sheep.

If you want a particularly complex session, you could have the characters travel through a deep dark tunnel, inhabited by a whole family of **knockers** who have set hundreds of traps and pitfalls in the dismal darkness.



Skill Base	
Athletics	14
Awareness	14
Brawling	16
Courage	18
Endurance	22
Intimidation	16
Physique	25
Resist Coercion	15
Resist Magic	15
Stealth	10
Wilderness Survival	12

<b>Armor</b>	15
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Knock-Down, Stagger	

Susceptibilities	
Ogroid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	16
<b>Reposition Base</b>	14
<b>Block Base</b>	15

Bounty	
1200	

Loot	
Cyclops' Eye (x1)	
Cyclops' Brain (x1)	
Cyclops' Bones (x3d6)	
Crystalized Essence (x1d6/2)	
Cyclops' Tongue (x1)	



**Hard  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
—

INT	4
REF	7
DEX	6
BODY	15
SPD	6
EMP	4
CRA	5
WILL	8

STUN	10
RUN	18
LEAP	6
STA	110
ENC	300
REC	11
HP	110

<b>Height</b>	6m
<b>Weight</b>	3000kg
<b>Environment</b>	Mountains & plains
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or pairs

# Cyclops

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

Cyclopes are a strange group if ya ask me. They look sort a human, they were clothes, some of 'em wield weapons. But there still considered monsters by most folks. Heh, guess it's cause they just bel- low at people and try to crush 'em when they come near. Plenty of tales of cyclopes bein' sapient or sentient or whatever the word is. They just ain't too bright. They just stake out some land and try to kill anythin' that comes into it. Human, horse, cyclops, doesn't matter. Heard from a Skelliger in port that cyclops can't see more than three or four meters in front of 'em clearly so if ya stay at a bit of a distance they can't really make ya out.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:15)

Cyclops are one of the many ogroids that display signs of intelligence but are not what anyone would consider smart. That being said, a cyclops doesn't need to be smart to kill you. But you'll have to be smart to survive. When one charges at you, wildly screaming and flailing its arms, make the smart decision and get out of the way.

Close up, a cyclops's strikes are deadly. Its arms are wide enough to hit multiple foes in a single sweep, and are deadly when raised into the air and slammed into the ground. Don't stand under it if you want to remain alive. Especially if it's wielding some kind of massive bludgeoning weapon, usually a tree.

To kill a cyclops, you'll need to be clever. Work in a team, using ranged weapons to aim for its eye. Tip your arrows with Ogroid Oil and if you have a Mage fighting with you, have them stun the monster with their spells. While it won't hold a cyclops the same way it would another target, it will confuse the monster and likely send it into a rage. While it attacks nearby surroundings, your archers will have time to aim properly.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Club Smash	15	B	7d6+8	20	—	Long Reach, Knock-Down (75%), Crushing Force, Stun (-2)	1
Punch	16	B	6d6	15	—	Long Reach, Knock-Down (50%), Crushing Force	2

### Ability: Wild Rush

By taking its full turn, a cyclops can charge up to 10m, swinging its arms wildly. This 10m doesn't need to be a straight line and the cyclops can turn corners and jump gaps. Anyone within 2m of the cyclops as it runs by must defend against its Punch attack. If the target fails to defend, they take damage as if they were hit by the Punch attack.

### Ability: Confused By Stun

If a cyclops would be **stunned** by a form of magic, it is instead confused and angered. Instead of being **stunned**, it spends its next turn attacking the closest target. This target can be any character, creature, or object at least 1.75m tall. If there are multiple targets within range of the cyclops it rolls randomly to determine which one to attack. After that round it is unaffected.

### Ability: Sweeping Strike

By taking its full turn, a cyclops can make a sweeping strike with either its Punch or Club Smash attack. The cyclops makes one attack at a penalty of -3. However, every target in range within its vision cone must defend or be hit by the attack.

### Ability: Ground Pound

By taking its full turn, a cyclops can slam its fists into the ground, creating a shockwave centered on the itself with a 4m radius. Anyone in this area must make a DC:16 Athletics check or be knocked **prone** and forced to make a Stun Save.

### Ability: Height Advantage

A character cannot hit a cyclops's head with an attack unless they are using a ranged weapon or a weapon with Long Reach. The only other chance is if the character is elevated to the same height as the cyclops or it is leaning down for some reason. If none of these criteria are met and a character rolls the head location on their attack, they must roll again until a location other than the head is rolled.



Skill Base	
Athletics	14
Awareness	12
Brawling	13
Courage	14
Crafting	14
Deceit	15
Endurance	15
Intimidation	14
Language: Common Speech	10
Language: Goblin	10
Persuasion	11
Physique	17
Resist Coercion	12
Resist Magic	13
Stealth	14
Trap Crafting	16
Wilderness Survival	14

<b>Armor</b>	3
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Ogroid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	15
<b>Reposition Base</b>	14
<b>Block Base</b>	13

Bounty	
25	

Loot	
Knocker Hair (x2d6)	
Knocker Toes (x1d6)	
Knocker Teeth (x1d6/2)	



**Easy  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision  
Scent Tracking*

INT	4
REF	6
DEX	6
BODY	10
SPD	6
EMP	4
CRA	8
WILL	6

STUN	8
RUN	18
LEAP	3
STA	80
ENC	200
REC	8
HP	40

<b>Height</b>	2.5m
<b>Weight</b>	450kg
<b>Environment</b>	Caves & mountains
<b>Organization</b>	Groups of 2 to 6

# Knocker

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:15)

*If ya hear a dwarf talkin' about knockers they're probably talkin' about these bastards. Ya see, we ain't alone in the mountains and from time to time we gotta deal with our "neighbors." Kobolds and goblins and whatnot ain't that bad but the knockers or bucca or polterduks, or whatever ya feel like callin' 'em are the worst. They hide in the mines and set traps for the miners. Sometimes they'll even come out and knock the poor lads around a bit before scurryin' back into the tunnels. I heard some miners have taken to bringin' copper along with 'em and bangin' it on the rock walls of the tunnels as they go. Somethin' about it scares off the knockers I guess.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:17)

Knockers are an interesting sort of monster. Their bodies are covered in fur and much larger than an average man. They also sport braided beards that stretch down to the floor where their oversized feet paddle about barefoot.

Knockers are drawn to ore and prefer to live in resource rich caves and crags. The monsters are a nuisance to miners, stealing mining supplies, knocking over ladders and causing an awful racket by knocking on the walls of the mine shaft, as well as the helmets of particularly unobservant miners. They rarely go further than that, however. Knockers are mischief makers, not murderers.

In fact, when bribed with vodka, a knocker can be convinced to stop their tricks and help out. Knockers make excellent mounts, running just as fast as a horse, and are capable of carrying heavy loads. Their innate ability to find ore can also be put to good use.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Punch	13	B	2d6+4	10	—	—	1

### Ability: Drawn To Ore

A knocker has a special sense for finding ore. By taking an action, a knocker can automatically find any Everywhere or Common mineral or ore that would naturally appear in the region. Knockers also gain a +3 bonus to find minerals or ores when foraging.

### Ability: Bounding

Without taking an action, a knocker can get down on all fours to raise its SPD to 12. This changes the knockers run to 36 and its Leap to 7. While on all fours, the knocker cannot use its hands for anything.

*“I can’t count the number of times one of my brothers or I have been called to Mahakam to deal with knockers or kobolds. More often than not the ogroids are just making a nuisance of themselves. They steal tools, scare miners, and sabotage catwalks. Dangerous in their own respect but not nearly as pressing or bloodthirsty as a shaelmaar or an ogre. I spent three days with Vaz in the depths of a Mahakaman mine several years ago navigating tripwires and false floors just to find a band of knockers who were ambushing the miners to steal their liquor. I’ll admit that our patience was worn thin by the time we found them. Negotiation almost turned sour immediately when the hairy creatures started hurling rocks at us. Luckily clearer heads prevailed and a well cast Axii rendered them more than willing to listen.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	10
Awareness	11
Brawling	14
Courage	16
Crafting	17
Endurance	16
Intimidation	15
Language: Common Speech	8
Persuasion	9
Physique	18
Resist Coercion	12
Resist Magic	14
Stealth	12
Wilderness Survival	12

<b>Armor</b>	12
<b>Regeneration</b>	3

Resistances	
Bludgeoning, Piercing	
Immunities	
Knock-Down, Bleeding	

Susceptibilities	
Ogroid Oil , Poison	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	14
<b>Reposition Base</b>	10
<b>Block Base</b>	15

Bounty	
800	

Loot	
Troll Tongue (x1)	
Troll Skin (x1d6)	
Troll Liver (x1)	
Twine (x2d6)	
Leather (x1d6)	
Mundane Items (x1d6)	



**Medium  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	2
REF	7
DEX	4
BODY	14
SPD	4
EMP	6
CRA	9
WILL	5

STUN	9
RUN	12
LEAP	2
STA	45
ENC	140
REC	9
HP	90

<b>Height</b>	2.5m
<b>Weight</b>	500kg
<b>Environment</b>	Almost anywhere
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or pairs

# Troll

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:10)

*Ha! I gotta admit, I love trolls! Plenty of people are scared of 'em cause they're "monsters" but I think they're great fun if ya get to know 'em. Some people call 'em bridge trolls, some call 'em cave trolls, it's all the same. Trolls're among the easiest ogroids to get along with. They love vodka and they ain't too bright so if yer clever ya can work yer way 'round 'em pretty easy. I heard stories about 'em bein' made of stone. Not sure if it's true but it'd make sense! Heh, they're heavy and dense as a rock! Some folks say if ya ever get in a fight with a troll lead 'em to the water. They're so heavy they can't swim so they just sink right to the bottom and drown.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

Whether they live in forests, mountains caves, or under bridges, all trolls have in common two things: general stupidity and a love of vodka. While they are monsters, they are not inherently violent. Most would rather be drunk, and shortly thereafter, asleep. Just ask one.

If you do anger one, however, they can be dangerous. A troll can throw a boulder with accuracy over a great distance. Up close, a troll's fist makes them a dangerous opponent in a brawl, and their tough hide ensures the fight won't be over quickly. So why even start a fight with a troll in the first place? You do have vodka on you, right? If you must have a conflict with one, consider making it a friendly drinking match. There are better uses of Ogroid Oil, like cyclopeses.

Trolls are also adept at crafting. Bridges made by them are often favored by merchants for their stability. The tolls are usually relatively low, and are often, predictably, tied to the local price for a bottle of vodka.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Punch	14	B	5d6+2	15	—	Stun (-0)	2

### Ability: Throw Boulder

By taking its action, a troll can lob a nearby boulder or large rock at a target within 15m. This attack has a base 17. If the target fails to defend against the boulder, they take 6d6 damage to random location and if that location is the head or the torso the target must make a Stun Save at -1.

*“When dealing with trolls you must keep in mind that while they think similarly to humans, trolls are not human. Most trolls recognize humans, elves and other sapient races as both companions and food. When you are negotiating with a troll, it helps to establish that while you are willing to negotiate, you are not to be taken lightly. While a bribe of vodka or fresh meat is often enough to bring a troll around to your side, there are those among them who, much like humans, will simply kill you and take whatever you are offering them from your corpse. On many occasions, unsheathing my silver sword is enough to show an unruly troll I’m not to be trifled with but this could equally be thanks to my cat’s eyes and silver medallion. If you aren’t a witcher, I suggest coming to the bargaining table with a group of warriors or a large and intimidating weapon.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# An Unwanted Hunter

## 1151, An Skellig Transcribed Killian of Belhaven

Erland had regrets. Not that they were strong, but they were there. The Witcher had looked forward to seeing his homeland again and maybe visiting Larvik. It was rare that witcher's work landed him with a contract in Skellige. This wasn't a good paying contract, since the farmhand who had hired him was dirt-poor, but it was a contract, and a chance to see Hindarsfjall again. With his mount, Bron, and his traveling companion, Vaz, they had prepared. For him, it was the usual Thunderbolt potion to enhance his strength and applied Ogroid Oil to his silver sword. In the low mountains, they had lain in wait for the cyclops that terrorized the lowland farmer. Erland astride his steed, Bron, and Vaz climbing gracefully up to top of an outcropping of rock.

The ambush had gone well; the cyclops's afternoon lunch tossed aside in a bloody mess of hooves and wool. Erland had used Magic Trap, a witcher sign, in an attempt to keep the titan of an ogroid busy and off balance. Vaz, tucked quietly away at a distance, had his back. The mercenary's skilled marksmanship harassed and distracted the creature from fully taking out its rage on Erland. Arrow after silver arrow pierced the giant's hide, as it flailed its muscular arms just over Erland's head.

Erland had dipped in and dashed out in a series of thrusts and cuts, controlling Bron deftly. Passing the cyclops for a fifth time, ducking under its right hook, Erland saw the left fist of the cyclops moments too late. The titan swung his fist in a large sweeping strike; a whoosh of air following it. When hit by the slab of bone and flesh, Erland went flying off Bron, tumbling to the ground. The Witcher struggled to catch his breath and quickly checked his chest, finding his breastplate dented inward painfully. He had been too slow and another blow from the creature's huge fist would no doubt spell the end of his armor. But this wasn't Erland's regret.

The hunter rolled to his feet to see a small form nearby on a cliff above him. He hadn't the time to process what it was before he was forced to dodge to the side to avoid the double handed smash of the cyclops. Thankful that the cyclops had chosen to attack him over his horse. Bron had whinnied at the loss of his rider and made space between him and the beast, knowing if Erland wanted him, there would be a whistle. Vaz called out, "Don't flirt with the beast! Kill it already!"

Erland was about to retort when another of Vaz's arrows struck the cyclops squarely in the back of the head. The monster whirled around, looking for the source of his pain. It was in that moment that the small form atop the cliff, roughly twenty feet up, cried its vicious war cry and hurled large handfuls of dirt into the eyes of the cyclops. A child of maybe ten cheered in triumph as the monster roared in anger clawing at its face. Erland surged in, knowing a moment of hesitation could cause the child to lose his life. He cast the sign of Igni at his opponent, bathing his lower half in flames as Vaz hurriedly shot an arrow square into the huge palm of the approaching hand.

Erland could have sworn he had told that farmhand to clear the area. He regretted not checking to see if the farmhand had followed through on that. He regretted not having noticed the tiny human hiding on the cliffside immediately.

The Witcher focused back in on the fight, knowing too many distractions could lead to undesired outcomes. He knew without his horse that he was now at a disadvantage. He could not strike at the monster's head unless it stooped down. When the one beady eye met his feline eyes, he made the decision to retreat back with a whistle to his horse. With luck, the creature would forget about the child and focus on him. Bron ran to him and Erland swung up onto the moving horse with ease. A well-placed arrow drew the cyclops' attention long enough for the Witcher to clear its arm's reach.

"Vaz! Get the child before he decides he's going to jump on its back!" Erland called to his companion. He raised his blade and gave a bellowing yell as the cyclops charged him. Moments before the cyclops brought down its mighty fists, the Witcher created the sign of Quen, forming a bubble of magic around himself and Bron. He braced as magical sparks flew from the force of the cyclops' fists against the protective bubble. A howl of rage filled the air as the titan raised both fists to bear down on the sustained magic. The yellow magic flickered and broke as the attack crashed down on it, barely protecting and keeping Erland safe. As the cyclops reared back from the blast of the Quen shield, Erland used the chance to slice into his belly then ride across the clearing to get space between them. He pulled Bron around, getting ready for the cyclops' next charge. Behind the cyclops, he could see Vaz snatch up the young boy with one arm and toss him back down the outcropping into the soft moss below.

The monster was ripping at the arrows in its hide now, ripping them free and tossing them aside with a grunt; ugly skin painted with red. Erland caught Vaz's eye and nodded, throwing his hand out in the sign of Axii. White lights began to dance around the cyclops's head as Erland's brow furrowed in concentration. Vaz took a deep breath and leapt from outcropping, landing on the giant's broad back, sword drawn. With a mighty swing, the mercenary cleaved into the neck of the cyclops. A thick spout of blood poured from the monster's neck as it was shaken from its daze, reaching up to grab at its neck as it began to collapse.

The body fell to its knees then fully to the ground with an earth-shaking thump. Vaz managed to jump as the body toppled, rolling to a stop in the grass, near Erland. Smiling, Erland wiped his blade, sheathed it "I was expecting you to shoot it. Is the child safe?"

"Safe enough," Vaz chuckled, pulling himself to his feet and moving to retrieve his sword from the cyclops' neck. "You can't saddle me with babysitting every time, Erland."







# Draconids

*Draconids are some of the worst monsters to hunt. Their scale can be like plate armor; their wings carry them hundreds of feet into the air, and the fire some spit melts flesh off bone. Worst of all, most nobility who hire a witcher to deal with a draconid want the creature tamed, not killed. They think they can keep it as a pet.*

—Erland of Larvik



True dragons are the ultimate monsters; we are both fascinated and terrified by them. They are at least as intelligent as humans and large, strong, and fast enough to be virtually unkillable. They are often not hunted by witchers, as they are sapient creatures who usually prefer to remain isolated from humanity, but there are a host of dragon-like monsters, the draconids. Cockatrice, wyverns, and basilisks have many dragon-like features but are not classified as true dragons, and thus are often hunted by Witchers. They do have many characteristics in common though. For one thing, the draconid monsters are almost all winged and attack their prey from the sky whenever possible, much like true dragons. Some are large enough to carry off prey as large as sheep and cows. Secondly, draconids are marked by the number of natural weapons they can bring to bear. They usually have sharp claws, taloned feet, gnashing jaws, and whipping tails. Some can attack with razor-sharp beaks in a way so accurate that their victims bleed to death in moments. Much like green dragons, many draconids have some form of poison in their barbed tails or venomous fangs. Similar to their true dragon superiors, some draconids spit fire, and these are the most treacherous.

Common people assume that any large, scaly, flying creature preying on people and sheep is a dragon; and to be honest, for them it might as well be. Witchers know the difference well. They know that contrary to popular belief, none of these draconids can petrify with their gaze, and none of them have treasures like true dragons. Draconids tend

to live in dark, damp places where they wait to ambush passing creatures, and most patrol their territory, killing anything that enters. Fortunately, almost all the draconids appear to be relatively solitary and at the most you may find them in pairs. However, you should keep in mind that they are notably even more fierce when nesting. If you spy a draconid's nest, you likely are beyond help. Your best option is to flee as quickly as possible and hope that the draconid whose territory you have wandered into is currently off hunting someone even less fortunate than yourself.

Belief is that dragons and draconids were common before human colonists arrived; however, it is true that they are extremely rare now. Perhaps there is some truth to the tales of human and dwarven dragon hunters. The Crinfrid Reavers are the best-known dragon killers, claiming to have killed all the forktails and dracolizards in Redania, as well as four true dragons. It is a very dangerous business, but potentially quite lucrative. Dragons can be harvested for alchemical and magical components as valuable as they are rare. Some people take terrible risks for money. I've heard that some druids and mages can tame draconids and are now working to preserve them, but they probably aren't going to have a whole lot of support from the common people for whom draconids are still the stuff of nightmares.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Draconid Encounters

Draconids can often pose a serious threat; and their ability to fly makes them very dangerous. They can make excellent single-monster encounters.

Perhaps the characters have to go down into a noble's wine cellar to oust a vicious **cockatrice** that threatens to destroy all the aging barrels of wine.

The characters could wind up encountering a **phoenix** that was killed (perhaps unjustly) in the past by the inhabitants of a nearby city and now it is bent on burning down that city to get their revenge.

The characters could wind up being hired by a noble or perhaps a powerful mage to find and capture and tame a **slyzard** so it can be their employer's regal and intimidating pet. Of course, they soon learn that this is a terrible idea.

To create an interesting subplot, you could have the characters be given a **phoenix** egg by a mage who wants them to transport it to one of their colleagues so they can study the nearly extinct draconid.



Skill Base	
Athletics	16
Awareness	15
Brawling	17
Courage	16
Endurance	16
Intimidation	15
Physique	17
Resist Magic	14
Stealth	15
Wilderness Survival	13

<b>Armor</b>	8
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Poison	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Draconid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	15
<b>Reposition Base</b>	16
<b>Block Base</b>	17

Bounty	
800	

Loot	
Cockatrice Stomach (x1)	
Cockatrice Carapace (x2d6)	
Venom Extract (x1d6)	
Cockatrice Tail Feathers (x1d6)	



**Medium**  
**Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	8
DEX	9
BODY	12
SPD	7
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	4

STUN	8
RUN	21
LEAP	4
STA	40
ENC	120
REC	8
HP	80

<b>Height</b>	2m
<b>Weight</b>	800kg
<b>Environment</b>	Caves & cellars
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or pairs

# Cockatrice

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:15)

Heh, every farmer knows, if ya let your roosters get a bit too fond of each other you'll get a cockatrice. The rooster'll lay a little green speckled egg then in the cover of night it'll take the egg off to a toad who'll sit on the egg for forty-four days til the egg hatches. Turns out to be a pretty shite deal for the toad cause the cockatrice eats it first thing. Heh, parenthood in action. Once it's been born, cockatrice hate everythin' they see so fiercely they can turn critters to stone just by lookin' at'em! If ya find yerself fightin' a cockatrice, first ya gotta get it on the ground. They like to fly around and swoop down with their claws and beak. Then, when It tries to turn ya to stone ya gotta hold up a mirror and reflect it!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

I'll just say this once. A cockatrice is a draconid. It has nothing to do with a rooster. It doesn't turn anything to stone, so don't cower behind an oversized mirror and think you'll be safe.

Cockatrices prefer cold and damp caves, wherever they might be. They are known to take up residence in poorly managed wine cellars, for instance. Be careful when you go for another bottle, as a cockatrice has many weapons: a barbed tail that causes nasty bleeding, two lightning quick claws, and a poisonous beak. You'll want to bring Gold Oriole Potion and clotting powder.

A cockatrice prefers to hunt from the air, but this can be solved with a well-placed projectile. They aren't the strongest fliers. Once on the ground, its instincts lead it more often than not to charge forward, and take to the air briefly mid-charge before ultimately ripping down with one of its claws after it picks up enough speed. Get out of the way of this charge, mind its tail, and keep your eyes fixed on the beast at all times. It will make its claws much easier to dodge.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	17	P	5d6	15	—	Poison (50%)	1
Claw Slash	17	S	4d6+3	10	—	Bleeding (50%)	2
Tail Swipe	17	S	4d6+3	5	—	Bleeding (75%), Long Reach	1
Wing Buffet	17	B	2d6	5	—	Stagger (25%)	1

### Ability: Flight

As long as its wings remain, a cockatrice can take its move action to move 7m either horizontally or vertically. While in the air, a cockatrice must use repositions to defend. The cockatrice can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 10 points of damage with an attack. If the cockatrice is knocked out of the air it must make a DC:18 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a cockatrice can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack, and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

### Ability: Charge

By taking its full turn, a cockatrice, can charge up to 10m and make a single Claw Slash attack with a base of 14. If the target fails to defend, they take 7d6 damage to the torso and are knocked back 6m. If the target strikes anything while flying back, they take a number of d6s of damage equal to the half the number of meters they flew. If a target successfully blocks this attack, they must make a Physique check (DC: 20) to avoid being knocked back as noted above.

*“If you are hired to hunt a cockatrice always investigate the reason. Cockatrice, much like bears claim a territory and hunt within it. As long as you aren't in their territory you won't have any problems. While this can lead to problems if a trade route passes through that territory, I've also seen plenty who simply want the beast's lustrous feathers.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	16
Awareness	19
Brawling	15
Courage	17
Endurance	14
Intimidation	15
Persuasion	13
Physique	15
Resist Coercion	16
Resist Magic	16
Stealth	14
Wilderness Survival	14

Armor	10
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Fire, Freeze	

Susceptibilities	
Draconid Oil, Dimeritium Bombs	

Dodge Base	17
Reposition Base	16
Block Base	16

Bounty	
1200	

Loot	
Phoenix Feathers (x1d6)	
Phoenix Ash (x2d6)	
Essence of Fire (x2d6)	
Infused Dust (x1d6)	
Fifth Essence (x1d6)	
Phoenix Egg or Baby Phoenix (x1)	



**Medium  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	5
REF	9
DEX	10
BODY	10
SPD	10
EMP	5
CRA	3
WILL	8

STUN	9
RUN	30
LEAP	6
STA	45
ENC	100
REC	9
HP	90

Height	3m
Weight	550kg
Environment	Mountains
Organization	Solitary or pairs

# Phoenix

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

Now this is surprisin'.... Even the Witcher I used to travel with told me phoenixes were myths. Sure, I've heard of lords and ladies tryin' to make clothin' out of their feathers but I figured they'd just been spoutin' hot air! Only thing I'd really heard about phoenixes was that they were these mythical birds that were made of ash and fire. Quite a sight from what people say—especially at night. Some people said phoenixes used to be drawn to powerful fire mages, or even that when a mage who'd studied the element enough died, they'd rise as a phoenix at the dawn. Guess if ya gotta deal with one I'd suggest tryin' to talk to it. From all the tales it sounds like they're smart enough—for a giant bird made of fire.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:18)

Phoenixes are among the rarest monster on the Continent and many scholars argue whether phoenixes were driven to extinction or whether they just migrated to some unknown land. If, by some chance, you encounter a phoenix your first and best option is to try to negotiate. While phoenixes aren't capable of speech, they can be reasoned with. If this fails you should be wary as they have a wide variety of offenses, most of which involve lighting a threat on fire.

Trying to light a phoenix on fire or freeze it is futile thanks to the fire magic coursing throughout their body but the use of a Dimeritium Bomb will stop them from spraying fire and embers. If you do manage to kill a phoenix its body will erupt into flames, leaving only ashes and feathers. But among this mess you can find either a phoenix egg or a baby phoenix. In essence, this is the phoenix that you just killed. The phoenix retains its memories but is now in a juvenile form (or in an egg).

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Beak	16	P	6d6	15	—		1
Claw Slash	16	S	4d6	15	—	Bleed (50%)	2
Wing Buffet	16	B	3d6	10	—	Fire (50%), Stagger (25%)	1

### Ability: Ember Wave

By taking its full turn a phoenix can fly up to 30m creating a 30m long, 6m wide line of raining embers. Anyone in that area must make a DC:18 defense roll or take 1d6 damage to every body location and have a 75% chance of being lit on **fire**. After the phoenix's turn ends, ground in this area lights on fire. Anyone who ends their turn in this area has a 75% chance of catching **fire**. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Fire Stream

By taking its full turn, a phoenix can breathe a stream of fire from its mouth. The phoenix rolls an attack with a base 16 at a target within 4m. If this target fails to defend, they take 4d6 damage and have a 75% chance of being set on **fire**. The phoenix can use this ability for up to three rounds, after which it must cool down for at least one round before using it again. The phoenix can switch targets each round. Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Flaming Rebirth

A phoenix's body glows with magic, producing light like a torch and lighting the surrounding area. If a phoenix is knocked below 0 Hit Points its body bursts into flames. Anyone within 4m of the phoenix has a 50% chance of being set on **fire** and anyone in melee range of the phoenix takes 3d6 damage to all locations and is set on **fire**. After this explosion, the phoenix's body is reduced to ash and within this ash can be found the loot of the phoenix. If the phoenix was young, a Phoenix Egg will be found in the ash as well. If the phoenix was an adult, a baby phoenix will be found instead. The baby phoenix is aggressive towards the ones who killed its mother but it now uses the same stats as a bird (see *Witcher TRPG* 311).

### Ability: Flight

As long as its wings remain, a phoenix can take its move action to move 10m either horizontally and vertically. While in the air, a phoenix must use repositions to defend. The phoenix can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 10 points of damage with an attack. If the phoenix is knocked out of the air it must make a DC:18 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a phoenix can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

### Ability: Ash Spray

By taking its action, a phoenix can flap its wings and project a 10m cone of ash. Anything in that cone must make a DC: 16 defense roll or be **blinded** for 1d6 rounds.



Skill Base	
Athletics	19
Awareness	18
Brawling	17
Courage	17
Endurance	17
Intimidation	16
Physique	18
Resist Magic	16
Stealth	16
Wilderness Survival	17

<b>Armor</b>	16
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Piercing, Slashing, Fire	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Draconid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	17
<b>Reposition Base</b>	19
<b>Block Base</b>	18

Bounty	
1500	

Loot	
Slyzard Scales (x2d6)	
Venom Extract (x2d6)	
Slyzard Talons (x1d6)	
Slyzard Vocal Cords (x1d6/2)	



**Hard  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	12
DEX	10
BODY	11
SPD	8
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	7

STUN	9
RUN	24
LEAP	4
STA	45
ENC	110
REC	9
HP	90

<b>Height</b>	3m
<b>Weight</b>	950kg
<b>Environment</b>	Mountains
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary or pairs

# Slyzard

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:18)

Slyzards—or dracolizards to some—are right nasty beasts. They're a kind of dragon that ain't as impressive as a green dragon or a red dragon but they're big and nasty and they got magic like a dragon. Heh, Some folk were talkin' about big white slyzards with no eyes and whatnot but everyone knows a slyzard's mottled green with a face like a toothy bird! They love to live in swamps and ya gotta watch out for their barbed tails! Swing 'em so fast and so hard not even a witcher can parry 'em. In some places on the yaruga they say if ya feed a slyzard a fish soaked in honey and wrapped in river reeds it'll appease the beast but I've never heard of anyone doin' it.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

Many peasants make the mistake of confusing a slyzard for the comparatively far less dangerous forktail. Speaking of mistakes, some also claim that you can appease one with food. This will get you killed. To the slyzard, you are food. The beast is an exceptional predator, that fights seamlessly in the land and air. It is most well known for its long whiplike tail, which can cover a large area in a deadly sweep. Dripping in poison, its tail can strike faster than even a trained witcher can dodge, causing horrifying lacerations in an instant. Its tail, however, is not its only killing tool. The slyzard can also spit fire and project a sonic blast that can stagger its foes, leaving them easy prey for its razor-sharp teeth.

It is only with preparation that it becomes remotely possible to slay one and even then, a fight with a slyzard is always a dance with death. I've never heard of anyone killing a slyzard without Draconid Oil, or a method of dealing with its poison. A Grapeshot Bomb can knock it out of the air, giving you time. Staying spread out can lessen the dangers posed by its sweeping attacks. Quen might keep you alive long enough to deal a final blow to the beast, as could fire protection, but nothing is certain when fighting this monster.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	20	P	7d6+2	20	—	Armor Piercing	1
Claw Slash	20	S	6d6+2	15	—	Bleed (50%)	2
Tail Sweep	20	P/S	6d6	15	—	Long Reach, Bleed (50%), Poison (75%), Crushing Force	1

### Ability: Fire Ball

By taking its action, a slyzard can roll an attack at a base 18, to spit a ball of fire at a target within 8m. If the target fails to defend against this attack, they take 6d6 damage to a random location and have a 75% chance of being lit on **fire**.

### Ability: Sweeping Strike

By taking its full turn, a slyzard can make a sweeping strike with its Tail Sweep attack. The slyzard makes one attack at a penalty of -3. However, every target in range within its vision cone must defend or be hit by the attack.

### Ability: Flight

As long as its wings remain, a slyzard can take its move action to move 8m either horizontally or vertically. While in the air, a slyzard must use repositions to dodge. The slyzard can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 10 points of damage with an attack. If the slyzard is knocked out of the air, it must make a DC:24 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a slyzard can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack, and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

### Ability: Sonic Blast

By taking its full turn, a slyzard can project a 6m cone of powerful compressed sound. Anything in that cone must make a DC:16 reposition roll (if the reposition would not cover enough ground to get out of the area, the defense fails) or block with a shield. If they fail to defend, the target takes 5d6 damage to the torso, is knocked back 4m, and **staggered**. If the target blocked, they must make a DC:16 Physique check or still be knocked back 4m. If the target strikes anything while flying, they take ramming damage as if from a horse.







# Fire From the Sky

## 1163, Northern Redania Transcribed Killian of Belhaven

A creature, which the Witcher had only ever heard of, rose into the air over the tiny Redanian village. A cloud of embers let loose behind it, falling onto the village and bursting into flames. The creature's chest flared with light from behind a skinless ribcage and black wings melded into the storm clouds above. Bright eyes scanned the village before its glowing beak opened. It swooped out of the air and towards part of the village.

Erland spurred his horse forward, glancing towards Nylah. "It's a phoenix. I've never had the pleasure of seeing one in person, but it seems to be looking for something." Erland pointed out to Nylah as they rode.

"But what?" Nylah asked, keeping up on her spotted mare.

Erland kicked Bron into a gallop as the phoenix flapped its wings in anger. A large cone of ash and soot shot forth, bathing the villagers who tried to run. Erland was astonished at how true the stories of these creatures had been.

The Witcher leapt from his horse at the edge of the village and ran in, Nylah close behind. His eyes darted to a man in lush robes running from behind one house. The phoenix's gaze snapped to him and it dove, claws outstretched to attack. Thinking quickly, Erland body-slammed the Alderman to the ground, feeling the heat of the phoenix pass over them. Nylah moved under the cover of a nearby balcony and shouted, "It's coming back! Erland! Shield!"

Erland rolled off the Alderman onto his back just quick enough to throw up the sign of Quen. Talons clattered against the Quen, but it held.

In a panic, the Alderman scrambled to his feet, rushing to a nearby building and throwing open the door. As Nylah and the Erland approached the young merchant seized the Alderman's shoulders. "Why is it attacking the town? Do you know?"

"It's a monster! It wants to eat us all!" The Alderman cried, trembling to his core.

Nylah pushed him into the cover of the inn as Erland pulled his sword out, watching the circling monster. "The Witcher said it's intelligent. It must have a reason for attacking your village. What has changed recently? What might have upset it?" She distracted the man by turning his back to the fight. "The Witcher will handle it, so you don't need to worry."

The Alderman caught sight of Nylah in full now, covered in jewels and almost gilded from head to toe. She was beautiful, though the dust of the road and the attack covered her as much as any of them. She looked well-traveled and composed with her long, black hair braided out of the way. The Alderman hesitated before saying, "There's been very few changes..."

The phoenix ignored the Witcher and dove for the entrance to the inn. Erland cast the sign of Aard, pushing it up into the air, redirecting its course of flight. The creature squalled in anger. With a nod to Erland, Nylah looked back to

the Alderman with a calming smile "I'd say it doesn't like you very much, Mr. Alderman."

The portly man began to sweat a bit. "It's proolly the loggin'.... And hunting.... We've been tryin' a new area. Closer to the mountain. It's very fertile." The Alderman explained quickly.

The phoenix circled up into the air, creating a cloud of embers that started to fall to the ground. Erland could see many embers settle into the thatch roof of the inn. The Witcher called out, "We don't have much time, Nylah!"

"Erland, can we negotiate with it?"

Erland tracked the phoenix quickly, as it soared through the sky "What?"

"See if we can get it to stop!" Nylah said, moving out the building as the roof began to crack and weaken. "I think you'd rather let me talk to it than try to find a way to fight it. I know how much you hate being on fire."

Erland raised his head to look at the giant bird who circled them. He put his sword away and pushed the Alderman to the ground roughly. "Sit."

The Alderman looked panicked for a moment, but Nylah bent over and soothed him. She looked up to the sky and called up, using her most diplomatic tone. "We want peace!"

The creature looked them over before soaring down to land a good distance away from them. Erland noted that it was enough space for it to take flight before attacked.

Nylah spoke softly, "Let me, Erland. I've handled language barriers before."

Nylah placed a soothing hand on the Alderman's shoulder and spoke, "We don't wish to fight. We want peace." She reached down and took the sheathed blade from the Alderman's belt. The giant bird bristled as she held the weapon, but she quickly tossed the weapon at its feet. "We want peace."

The phoenix looked at the sword, then to her, and then her companions. It lifted its head and looked towards the mountains and squawked.

Nylah nodded, lowering her head in respect and spreading her arms "Your home has been disturbed. I can see that. These humans have hunted your prey and cut down your trees. Correct?"

The warbling cry from deep in the phoenix's throat resonated through the air as it spread its fiery wings. Erland's hand twitched towards his blade, but Nylah grabbed his wrist. "They have wronged you, but you must be willing to show them pity. They don't know the markings of the phoenix. Now that they know you live on the mountain they will go nowhere near you. Correct, Mr. Alderman?"

They all looked to the Alderman who took his cue and bowed deeply to the ground. "We will cease our work near the mountain if the bir—phoenix will stop burning our village."







# Vampires

*Any vampire lesser than a Katakain is worth a bit of preparation. They're fast and clever enough to turn the tables on a witcher, but still easy enough to kill when you pin them down. Anything more powerful than a garkain is a tough hunt. They can hide from your senses, mess with your mind, and they're faster than any human could hope to be.*

—Erland of Larvik



There are so many types of vampires that it is hard to keep them all in one's head. Especially since most of us would rather not think of blood-sucking creatures at all. All of them have come from some blood-sucking dimension during the Conjunction. We know that the highest of vampires exist, probably living among us, but I believe we choose not to think about them. We have made up all sorts of superstitions of their weaknesses to comfort us. Vampires are deterred by garlic, burned by holy relics, cannot cross running water. All wrong. They are desperate attempts to convince ourselves that we are safe. The highest of vampires are monsters that not even witchers can rid us of. They are immortal and see us as fleeting creatures. Popular wisdom is that if we care to give up our immortal soul, we can join them in immortality if they drain us of our blood. This isn't true either. Vampires are a race all their own. Fortunately, the most powerful of vampires don't even need to drink blood. One of the most memorable things about vampires is that many can heal grievous wounds in mere moments. It is said that the most powerful vampires can be staked, dismembered, beheaded, and still come back as good as new; though it may take a while. A frightening thought in the quiet night.

There are some vampire varieties that do need to drink blood. Some are humanoid, intelligent, and may be able to pass as human. They seem to favor appearing as attractive and charming women to lure in prey. These creatures need to live in—or close to—our communities to be sure of a reliable supply of

blood. Some can become invisible or become fog-like and they are unnaturally agile.

Fortunately, the further we go down the vampire spectrum, the less human they appear. There are some who appear as similar to giant bats. Despite their monstrous appearance, remember that they are still intelligent. Probably because they aren't truly humanoid, they prefer to hide in the shadows and feed at night.

Then there are the lowest vampires. They are certainly not as intelligent as more powerful vampires and don't look humanoid. They're more like animals. What they lack in intelligence they make up for in ferocity. I don't know that we should think of them as vampires exactly. They are happy to rip their prey apart to get to their blood. They have no fear and are happy to hunt in groups. It's hard to say which of these groups is the most horrifying. Like most Post-Conjunction monsters, they are damaged by silver, but with their regeneration that is little comfort. Apparently if you burn the body and scatter the ashes of the lower vampires you can kill them. However, we must remember that our myths and legend will not save us. In fact, they make us more vulnerable as most are not true. Many knights have valiantly stretched out an arm holding a sigil of the eternal flame against a vampire only to find that arm torn from them.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Vampire Encounters

Vampires are nocturnal predators that range in intelligence from humanoid to entirely feral. They can be used for high-intrigue campaigns but also as vicious night terrors.

Perhaps the characters are sent to an abandoned opera house that a **bruxa** has made its home and decorated with strange, macabre decorations and hundreds of birds' nests. They could fight the **bruxa** or they could try to speak with it.

While in a major capital the characters could stumble upon a series of gruesome murders, perpetrated by one or more **garkain**. Now the race is on to find the **garkain** and stop them before they kill again.

A single **plumard** is far from dangerous but perhaps the characters stumble upon a confluence of tens of **plumard**, forming one enormous, sky-darkening swarm.

For a particularly difficult encounter, the characters could be hired to deal with a vampire in a city, only to learn it is a **bruxa** who keeps **garkain** as pets.



Skill Base	
Athletics	22
Awareness	16
Brawling	23
Charisma	13
Courage	17
Endurance	16
Intimidation	18
Persuasion	15
Physique	17
Resist Coercion	17
Resist Magic	18
Seduction	16
Social Etiquette	14
Stealth	18
Wilderness Survival	16

<b>Armor</b>	10
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
Stun, Bleed, Poison	
Immunities	
Magic Scanning	

Susceptibilities	
Vampire Oil, Black Blood Potion, Moondust Bombs, Fire	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	20
<b>Reposition Base</b>	22
<b>Block Base</b>	24

Bounty	
2000	

Loot	
Abomination Lymph (x1d6/3)	
Naezan Salts (x1d6/2)	
Bruxa Blood (x1d6)	
Vampire Teeth (x1d6/2)	
Essence of Death (x2d6)	
Mundane Items (x1d6)	



**Hard  
Difficult**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Superior Night Vision*

INT	6
REF	14
DEX	14
BODY	11
SPD	12
EMP	6
CRA	5
WILL	8

STUN	9
RUN	36
LEAP	7
STA	45
ENC	110
REC	9
HP	90



<b>Height</b>	1.75m
<b>Weight</b>	90kg
<b>Environment</b>	Near settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Bruxa

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:18)

Heard tales about bruxa from plenty of folks down south. Maybe it's somethin' about the warmer climate but vampires sure seem to tend towards the south. Heh, this one old boy from Nazair once told me, a bruxa's a nymph like a water nymph or the like. But they've been corrupted by dark magic and carnal desires. They come out at night and lie with handsome young men before feedin' on their blood and sendin' 'em to the grave. Heh, yer not likely to kill a bruxa in combat 'cause they're faster than any human, with long razor-sharp claws and voices like batterin' rams. What ya gotta do is stall the bruxa 'til the sun rises. Moment the sun touches her skin she'll burn up like a dry hay loft!

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:16)

When a monster is sapient and deceptive enough to hide itself in a human settlement, it becomes very difficult to kill. In addition to this simple truth, bruxa are vampires, and even worse, fall under the terrifying category of those not weak to sunlight. Finding a bruxa in a settlement of humans can be difficult as they are able to blend in with their neighbors. If you walk the streets of a settlement at night, listen for a quiet yet shrill singing that resonates in the pit of your stomach. This is the song of the bruxa, a song they sing in their native language, especially after drinking blood.

By no means should you take a contract on any sapient vampire, which, I must remind you, are creatures capable of turning completely invisible, an ability against which traditional methods employed against the invisible are of limited aid, striking at blinding speeds, and firing powerful sonic blasts.

Sneaking up on one is difficult, as bruxa form close connections to birds, which give them early warning of guests. If you must stake your life on the folly of this hunt, keep the element of surprise for as long as you can. Walk the city listening for the sounds of birds and the scent of blood, checking the quieter places in the wealthier districts. Find a place to get your quarry alone, drink a Black Blood Potion, and fill the air with Moondust Bombs, Yrden, and Igni. Oil your silver sword properly, and bring to bear everything you have been taught, and you might live.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	24	P	5d6+3	10	—	Improved Armor Piercing, Blood Drain, Bleed (75%)	1
Claw Slash	24	S/P	4d6+4	15	—	Armor Piercing, Bleed (50%)	2

### Ability: Telepathy

A bruxa can telepathically communicate with any one character within 20m of them without taking an action.

### Ability: Drain Blood

If a bruxa's Bite attack deals damage to a target, the bruxa drains 2d6 points of Health Points from the target and heals that number of Health Points.

### Ability: Sonic Blast

By taking its full turn, a bruxa can project a 6m cone of powerful compressed sound. Anything in that cone must make a DC:16 reposition roll or block with a shield. If they fail to defend, the target takes 5d6 damage to the torso, is knocked back 4m, and **staggered**. If the target blocked, they must make a DC:16 Physique check or still be knocked back 4m.

### Ability: Close Ties To Birds

A number of small birds come to nest around the home of a bruxa. Anyone who comes within 20m of a bruxa's home must make a DC:18 Stealth check or the birds will begin to chirp, alerting the bruxa to danger. The bruxa doesn't know who is coming for them or how many people but it will know the basic direction the danger is coming from.

### Transformation: Maiden

Without taking an action, a bruxa can disguise itself as a beautiful woman with no monstrous features. While disguised this way a bruxa is physically indistinguishable from a human. If the bruxa uses any of its abilities except for Telepathy or Close Ties To Birds, their magical disguise drops and they return to their natural form. Moondust Bombs negate this ability.

### Ability: Superior Invisibility

By taking its action, a bruxa can become invisible. This grants the bruxa +10 to Stealth and +5 to attack and defense. Even if you make your Awareness check to spot the bruxa, it still gains a +3 to attack and defense. Yrden or a Moondust Bomb can make a bruxa semi-visible, reducing its Stealth bonus to +5 and its attack bonus to +3. Striking the bruxa will force it to become visible. While affected by Black Blood, the bruxa loses this ability.



Skill Base	
Athletics	17
Awareness	17
Brawling	18
Courage	16
Endurance	16
Intimidation	15
Physique	17
Resist Magic	17
Stealth	17
Wilderness Survival	16

Armor	0
Regeneration	—

Resistances	
Stun	
Immunities	
Fear	

Susceptibilities	
Vampire Oil, Black Blood Potion, Dimeritium Bombs	

Dodge Base	21
Reposition Base	17
Block Base	18

Bounty	
700	

Loot	
Garkain Saliva (x1d6) Wing Membrane (x1d6/3) Abomination Lymph (x1d6/3)	



**Medium  
Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	11
DEX	10
BODY	8
SPD	8
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	7

STUN	7
RUN	24
LEAP	4
STA	35
ENC	80
REC	7
HP	70



Height	2.25m
Weight	136kg
Environment	Near settlements
Organization	Solitary or pairs

# Garkain

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:16)

If ya ever see a garkain it's already too late from what folk say! Heh, creature's so damn ugly it can paralyze folks just by lookin' at 'em! I've seen paintin's of the thing but I've never had the pleasure of seein' one in the flesh. If ya believe the wives' tales ya gotta watch the rooftops when you're in cities in the south. Garkains hide up among the gargoyles and they like to pounce on folk and tear 'em to shreds with their claws. Been told that if ya see a garkain on a rooftop and ya hold up a mirror in front of the critter and say a prayer to yer chosen god or what have ya, it'll turn the garkain to stone. Some folks say plenty of the gargoyles in the capital of Nazair used to be garkains, heh.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:13)

Unlike more sapient vampires, garkain possess only a feral intelligence. By no means does this make them an easy target.

They are still vampires, and hunt in packs as wolves do, lead by an alpha.

Using cunning strategy and extreme vertical mobility they corner their victims, render them disoriented with blasts of psychic energy, and finally tear them apart with their claws.

Garkain need blood to survive, but they also perversely enjoy lapping it up as much as they do the mayhem of killing, leaving gruesome scenes in their wake. Blood on the ceilings, guts on the walls, that sort of thing.

When fighting one, or two, you must be most careful to resist its psychic pulses, or bring a Moondust Bomb to inhibit the garkain's psychic attacks, as taking too many renders you an easy target for a leaping strike, which is much easier to dodge with a clear head. Coat your silver in Vampire Oil, and if possible, fight in the sunlight if possible. This, of course is the best case scenario. Unfortunately, most garkain attacks are nighttime ambushes.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	18	P	5d6	10	—	Bleed (75%)	1
Claw Slash	18	S	4d6+4	15	—	Bleed (25%)	2

### Vulnerability: Celestial Sensitivity

When in the sunlight, a garkain is weakened and takes a -2 to all actions. The garkain loses this penalty the moment it moves out of the sunlight.

### Ability: Tremendous Leap

By taking its move action, a garkain can leap 10m from a standing start. This leap can be made horizontally or vertically.

### Ability: Leaping Strike

By taking its full turn, a garkain can leap up to 10m and make a single claw attack against a single target. This attack is made at a base of 15 but deals double damage and knocks the target **prone**.

### Ability: Psychic Pulse

By taking its full turn, a garkain can emit a psychic pulse. Anyone within 6m of the garkain must make a DC:16 Resist Magic check or be **staggered** and take a -2 to Awareness from their vision doubling for 1d6 rounds. The **stagger** effect affects all actions on each of the target's turns. If a target who is already **staggered** by the garkain's Psychic Pulse fails to defend against another Psychic Pulse they must make a Stun Save. If they are struck while **stunned**, this ends the **stagger** condition as well.

Dimeritium Bombs negate this ability.

*“Unsurprisingly, a number of notorious murderers have been discovered to be garkain operating in populous cities. If you are following a trail of gruesome, bloody murders, consider doing your investigation at dawn.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



Skill Base	
Athletics	15
Awareness	14
Brawling	8
Courage	8
Endurance	6
Intimidation	6
Physique	4
Resist Magic	9
Stealth	12
Wilderness Survival	13

<b>Armor</b>	0
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
—	

Susceptibilities	
Vampire Oil, Black Blood Potion, Fire	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	13
<b>Reposition Base</b>	15
<b>Block Base</b>	10

Bounty	
15	

Loot	
Plumard Stomach (x1) Wing Membrane (x1d6/3)	



**Easy  
Simple**

**Intelligence**  
*Feral*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	1
REF	5
DEX	6
BODY	1
SPD	7
EMP	1
CRA	1
WILL	4

STUN	2
RUN	21
LEAP	4
STA	10
ENC	10
REC	2
HP	10

<b>Height</b>	1m
<b>Weight</b>	4.5kg
<b>Environment</b>	Forests & swamps
<b>Organization</b>	Flocks of 6 to 12

# Plumard

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:15)

Now, I've had a run with exactly one kinda vampire in all my years on the roads of the Continent. Love to say I battle a bruxa in the streets of Spalla, gleaming dwarven axe in one hand and a cross-bow in the other, but we both know that ain't true. Heh, the only vampire I've ever seen up close was one of these bastard. Plumards're littered all 'round Angren and the Yaruga and their pests! Come out at night in flocks and swarm around ya, bitin' and chitterin'! I made quick work of two of 'em with my axe but I heard if ya wear a sigil of a god woven outta river reeds and tree bark it'll keep the beasts at bay. Water blessed by a priest'll kill 'em too from what I hear.

—Rodolf Kazmer



## Lore & Behavior (Monster Lore DC:14)

Plumards are a constant threat to livestock populations in Angren, and to a lesser extent, the peasants who own them and are stupid enough to be outside at night. While technically considered vampires, plumards are more akin to a pest than an apex predator.

Alone, a plumard can be killed easily, but in a group, a confrontation can quickly turn deadly. A cloud of plumards can number anywhere between 6 and 12. In combat, the entire group tends to target a single unarmored victim and swarm them from all angles.

With proper preparation, this behavior can be turned into a boon for your extermination efforts. Their tendency to group up during feeding leaves them open to all manner of methods, the easiest of which is fire. Igni can make cinders of several plumards at a time. A sorceress could probably kill scores more in an instant. However, flushing the group from a structure they are roosting in just before dawn would remove the need to do either. Don't waste your Vampire Oil.

Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	10	P	2d6	10	—	Drain Blood	1

### Vulnerability: Sunlight

When in an area of sunlight or bright light, a plumard is **blinded**. If it is ever directly in sunlight, the plumard takes 1 point of damage at the beginning of every round it remains in the sunlight.

### Ability: Drain Blood

If a plumard's Bite deals damage to a target, that target takes extra damage equal to the number of points of damage the plumard has taken and the plumard heals all damage.

### Ability: Flight

As long as its wings remain, a plumard can take its move action to move 8m either horizontally or vertically. While in the air, a plumard must use repositions to defend. The plumard can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 2 points of damage with an attack. If the plumard is knocked out of the air, it must make a DC:16 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a plumard can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack, and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

*“Plumards are among the weakest vampires on the Continent. But, that doesn't mean they should be classified as harmless. Once, in my travels, I had the opportunity to meet a nobleman who had decided to keep one as a pet. The plumard itself was less than terrifying and spent most of its time furiously flapping around its silver cage. But the flock of plumard that descended on the manor four nights later was far more horrifying.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*







# On Shadow Wings

## 1148, The Village of Riverton in Sodden Transcribed by Aderyn of Spalla

Everyone in Riverton had spoken to Erland with suspicion, which he expected. Most people feared Witchers and didn't understand the arts they used. But fear or no, they needed his services. He had asked for half the coin up front, and the town elders had gladly paid it. The job was high-risk, so the Witcher had requested volunteers. To his surprise, one man stepped forward. His name was Vaz and he claimed to be an expert marksman. Erland had dealt with such monsters as plagued this community often. It was a familiar pattern, herds were ravaged by a clutch of plumards: large, bat-like creatures, vampiric in nature, which attack in groups. But the tales from Riverton had been unusual. Townspeople had described twenty and thirty beasts swarming out of the shadows, stripping livestock to bone in minutes. Two children had even perished while gathering mushrooms in the forest. They had been found the next morning, mutilated and drained of blood, nearly unrecognizable. Erland had seen the mourning wreaths of thick, woven Blackthorn marking the doors as he had ridden into town. Erland had spent the day investigating, searching, feeling. He could hear little with the thick, damp forest absorbing sounds, but he could smell them well; a dark iron-scent mixed with ammonia and earth. How many were there that he could smell their filth even after a cold rain? At least four clutches were in the area. At that number, each clutch might hear another one feeding and come out to snatch what they could. There were tales of this happening during Elk migrations; clutches following the herd and collecting as they traveled. The Witcher knotted a rope high in a tree with the expertise of a weathered sailor. It was the last knot to tie that would secure the thick tarp-cloth above their heads. He had measured carefully. Plumards flew high until the moment of attack when they dead-dropped onto their prey. The two men had hung the tarp well below the comfortable flying level of the beasts, strung in a small clearing between four giant evergreen trees. Five sheep were tied just outside of the tarp at the front.

"I hope you know what you're doing, Witcher," said Vaz. He had a longbow and a quiver bursting with freshly fletched arrows. The men inventoried their gear again in silence. Erland checked the straps on his chain and plate, practiced drawing both his silver and steel longswords, and checked his potions. It was near dusk now, the grey light growing heavy with the weight of night. Erland nodded at Vaz, who used his torch to light a beacon planted in the ground. It was enough by which to see, but not enough to deflect the light-sensitive plumards.

As they finished preparations, Erland's medallion began to rattle; plumards were near, many of them.

The two men moved to the front of the tarp. Vaz notched an arrow, nodded. The monsters called to one another, a deafening chittering that drowned out the sound of the night. Erland drew silver and stomped, yelling to

scare the sheep. They screeched and pulled in all directions. Thump, thump, thump! A flood of plumards fell upon the sheep, two sheep collapsing under the weight of the biting beasts. More fluttered in the air, nearly imperceptible in the darkness. Erland stepped back under the tarp and one plumard followed him. Its wings bounced off the fabric stretched above their heads, making it wobble awkwardly. It careened and slammed into a tree. Smiling, the Witcher continued yelling and stomping to draw in more of them. Several of the fiendish creatures raced in, heedless of the low tarp that immediately encumbered them. They screeched hungrily while struggling to stay in the air. Vaz unleashed arrows at any that came too close, picking his shots carefully and never wasting a moment. Erland cut loose with his sword, slashing and swiping through plumards with graceful strokes. Swarming wings and teeth scrambled everywhere. Erland let his instincts take over, spinning and pirouetting in a violent dance.

Vaz fell back as two plumards landed on him, biting into his shoulder and flapping wildly as they sucked blood from the wound. Erland made two great leaps, slashing the wing from the body of one before delivering a deft back cut to the other. The plumard gurgled and fell in two pieces to the ground. The two men led the monsters to the end of the tarp, one slashing and the other firing arrows. They stepped out from under it where a heavy rope dangled. With a gesture of his hand, Erland flung a stream of fire at the paraffin-soaked rope which exploded in light, flames rushing up its length and across the top of the tarp in a spiderweb pattern. Erland and Vaz leapt to a safe distance as the tarp erupted in a fireball of raging, terrified wings clambering to escape. With a great rush of air, the burning tarp dropped landing on dozens of shrieking plumards. The fire clung to their flesh in smoky sheets sending the flaming creatures scattering into the night sky in a chaotic tumult of panic, only to come tumbling to earth. Erland pulled Vaz out of the way of a burning plumard that landed where they had just been standing. They stood quietly until the sky calmed and the flames went out. As Erland had predicted, the moist forest had resisted the fire. Minutes later, the chaos had waned to silence, and they could hear the chirping insects.

"Shit," said Vaz.

"Aye," Said Erland, beginning to clean his blade of ichor. "I'll admit, you're a skilled bowman. If you were a few decades younger I'd offer you a place at Kaer y Seren."

"I ain't interested in being a Witcher, Gryphon," Vaz began collected the undamaged arrows he could find among the corpses. "But maybe I'll see ya around again." The two hunters returned to town speaking no words. Erland went to the stables and mounted his horse. He nodded farewell to Vaz. He would camp in the open air tonight, waking with the first, tender light of the sun.







# Exceptional Monsters

*There are monsters out there that even a skilled witcher is hesitant to hunt. In some cases, the beasts are sapient and pose no real danger to humanity. But most often, it's because these beasts hold a power far greater than anything a witcher has ever faced.*

—Erland of Larvik



And then there are creatures that I hesitate to call monsters. They are sentient creatures who go about their business and are not waiting around corners to attack humans. Many of these creatures have skills and abilities above and beyond our own. So they frighten us and, as human do, we make them into horrors in our imagination. We teach our children to be afraid with bedtime stories. If something is a danger to humans does that make them a monster? Could we not acknowledge our fears and accept that there are things more powerful than us. If we turn these creatures into monsters, does that mean that sorcerers are monsters? Certainly the Witch Hunters of Redania would say so. Many people these days would call witchers monsters. Why is that? Do witchers prey on people? No, in fact they were created to protect us from monsters after the Conjunction. One wonders if people felt the same in Erland's time when there were so many monsters that the villager could not go out to his fields in peace. Now that monsters are rare and in some places mythical, Witchers are monsters. Why? Because they have abilities and skills greater than us. But we cannot accept that.

Am I suggesting that these exceptional monsters aren't a danger to us? Not at all. We need to understand what they are and how they constitute a danger so that we can defend ourselves, especially if we cannot appreciate Witchers for what they were made to be.

Should we band together and eradicate these exceptional creatures? One of the strengths we rely on is the ability to bring together groups of humans based on hatred and fear. Unfortunately that creates mobs. But mobs are not intelligent entities. They do not ask if what they are doing is right or even if what they are doing is smart. In most cases they do not think sufficiently to defeat exceptional monsters.

Perhaps our response is natural. Most of the monsters in this category live very long lives and do not see the world as we do. Perhaps they see us as ephemeral entities prone to violence and cruelty. Maybe this causes them to see us as lesser. That is certainly a good reason to fear them.

Manticore or bear or endrega attack people without thinking about it. They are not capable of thinking about it. Sapient monsters can and do think about it. This makes them very different but we do not know or understand how they see us. We also frequently need to see them as individuals, even as we are individuals. Not all humans are violent or cruel. Perhaps the individuals of these types are also different and we should deal with them as we deal with strangers. With a cautious attitude but not a programmed response to kill.

—Brandon of Oxenfurt

## Exceptional Encounters

Exceptional monsters are set aside for a good reason. Both true dragons and higher vampires are foes that even Geralt of Rivia or Yennefer of Vengerberg would think twice before fighting. Fighting one of these creatures in single combat is a suicidal task for almost anyone. The best ways to implement these monsters in your story is as important NPCs or plot points.

The characters could find out that one of their major benefactors is really a dragon and they are being threatened by a group of monster hunters hired by a banking syndicate.

Alternatively, the characters could wind up hunting down a relic only to find it in the possession of a powerful dragon.

Perhaps the characters are wind up roped into vampire politics when they are sent to negotiate with a higher vampire who is getting involved in human politics to build up their power to oppose another vampire.

If you want to give the characters a long-standing threat, you could have a higher vampire develop a fascination with one of the characters and stalk them. The vampire could want to kidnap them, kill them, or maybe even take over their life.







# True Dragons

*If one expects to survive a battle with a True Dragon they had best spend days preparing. True Dragons are terrifying beasts with a brutal mixture of speed and strength. If you manage to survive the onslaught of their claws and fangs you must be ready to defend against their flaming breath. Wherever possible, negotiation is your best path.*

—Erland of Larvik



One of the grandest mistakes common folk make regarding monsters is to assume that draconids are dragons. While the assumption is tempting, it is entirely untrue and has caused trouble for dragons and humanoids alike for centuries. Draconids may be tangentially related to dragons, but not all draconids are dragons. True Dragons—as many scholars and monster slayers refer to them—are exceedingly rare and extremely powerful creatures with an intellect far exceeding that of most draconids.

While not technically an elementa or a being of the elemental planes, true dragons are often thought of as representations of the forces of chaos themselves. Powerful, often unpredictable, and naturally bound to the forces of magic.

The immense power of True Dragons leads the people of Zerrikania to worship them and name their country after a legendary gold dragon: Zerrikanterment. However, in the western half of the Continent, the story is much different. In the Northern Kingdoms, the territories of Nilfgaard and the Skellige isles, True Dragons are often thought of as devilish monsters. Long ago, humans dubbed them “the single greatest threat to the human race.” In some regards they were correct. However, true dragons are sapient beings with largely the same range of emotions and personalities as humans and can be harmless or even benevolent in the right circumstances.

## The Colors

True Dragons are generally separated into sub-species, which are recognizable by their coloration. Each sub-species has different capabilities, personality quirks, and territories. The five officially recognized sub-species of true dragon are: brown dragons, black dragons, green dragons, red dragons, and white dragons. There are rumors of golden dragons, but as the record stands there is no concrete proof of their existence.

## Brown Dragons

Brown Dragons—also often called rock dragons—are likely the most lesser-known of the true dragons. This is probably because, of all species of true dragon, they are the least initially impressive. Brown dragons are usually around 10m in length, with long, thin bodies, and smaller wings that fold tightly to their bodies. Their craggy, armored heads are perched on shorter necks, and their four legs are powerful and end in sharp, shovel-like claws. The brown dragon’s scales are usually a warm brown hue with harder, greyish scales traveling along its spine. Where most forms of true dragon prefer to travel by flight, brown dragons prefer to burrow beneath the ground. Brown dragons are most often encountered by dwarves and gnomes as they are burrowing under mountains. When stubborn hard-headed dwarves meet equally stubborn brown dragons, conflict is often unavoidable.

## True Knowledge of Dragons

True information regarding True Dragons can be difficult to come by. Much as is the case with *The Witcher*, a great deal of misinformation has been spread about True Dragons. You must make a Monster Lore check (DC:20) to know the true lore of True Dragons.



## Gold Dragons

Folk used to think gold dragons were just a myth. But then again, we used to think the same about phoenixes and there's plenty about 'em in this journal here. Heh, all changed a few years ago though. King Niedamir of Caingorn went huntin' a wounded green dragon in the mountains near Barefield. Took a posse of heroes with him. Gera!t of Rivia, Yennefer of Vengerberg, the poet Dandelion, the Crinfrid Reavers, Yarp!n Zigrin and his mercenary band, and Eyck of Denesle! Musta been one hell of a journey. Folk say there was a group of Zerrikanians with 'em too but I don't know. Either way, the posse cornered the dragon, but it was bein' protected by a gold dragon! They say its scales shown like worked gold and it moved with the grace of a dancer or some such. Heh, guess they're less of a myth and more of an endangered species. Or maybe they only breed over in Zerrikania.

—Rodolf Kazmer

## Black Dragons

Black Dragons are a particularly rare sub-species of true dragon, which is most often documented in the southern territories near Nilfgaard and Gemmera. These dragons are generally the largest sub-species, ranging from 15 to 20m in length, with large wings and four powerful legs, ending in sharp claws. A black dragon gets its name from its dark-brown to black scales which are touted as being as hard as Mahakaman steel. It's said that hunting a black dragon with anything less than a ballista is a fool's errand, since anything less will bounce off its scales like rain off a roof. When roused to anger, a black dragon is capable of spraying a jet of burning acid from a gland in its jaws. This acid is caustic enough to eat through even the sturdiest armor and often melts the terrain around the dragon's target. Luckily, black dragons aren't easily roused to anger and are often lazy creatures.

## Green Dragons

Green Dragons are the most common and also smallest of the true dragons, measuring in at only around 5m. Their mottled green scales allow them some amount of camouflage in the forests in which they like to live, and they often make nests near hot springs. Green dragons have one set of legs and one pair of wings making flight their most comfortable form of travel; however, they are capable of stalking along the ground quite effectively if necessary. In combat, the bite of a green dragon is laced with a powerful venom, which cannot be treated by any form of alchemical concoction and often spells death for anyone who tries to fight them. Usually though, a green dragon that finds itself under attack emits a powerful blast of scalding steam from its mouth, driving off attackers or cooking them in their armor. Green dragons can often be friendly, but if threatened or denied, they become violent.

## Red Dragons

Red dragons are among the most feared dragons on the Continent. Not necessarily because of their temperament—which can be prideful and aggressive—but for their breath of fire. In a single moment, a red dragon

can breathe a gout of fire so hot that when caught directly in the blast, boulders and bricks melt. Many cities have burned down with just one blast of red dragon fire. These fearsome dragons are also large—generally around 12 to 15m—with brick-red scales and spines protruding all over their bodies. Red dragons live in the mountains, often in caves near the heart of the mountain, and come out to feed and collect treasure for their horde. Usually, when common folk see a red dragon, it is either consuming their horses or making off with statues and other valuables. This has lent a bad name to red dragons, who can be delightful conversation partners and debate competitors.

## White Dragons

Many still speculate whether white dragons are a myth, cooked up by the explorers who went north of the Dragon Mountains. These four-legged, winged dragons are said to have a coat of scales that range from bluish-white to light grey and a long, thin body with an ornately crested head. White Dragons travel snow-covered forests and valleys of the Far North, commanding the respect of the native inhabitants. They are reasonably large—around 12m in length—and capable of breathing out a blast of winter wind, which can encase creatures and objects in a thick coating of ice. White dragons have been spotted in the Dragon Mountains but never within the boundaries of the northern kingdoms. They obviously prefer the howling wilderness of the Far North and likely couldn't stand the warmer climates of Redania, let alone the tropical climates of southern Nilfgaard.

## Dragon Society & The Fall

In general, true dragons are loners. They may meet with other dragons to socialize or mate, but the vast majority of remaining dragons live alone in their lairs. Arguably, this may be the result of their near-eradication at the hands of humans.

Long ago, true dragons were prevalent. Being the largest and most dangerous creatures on the Continent at the time, they ruled the land. Little is known about that time and no scholar can say whether dragons formed



kingdoms or the like. While dragons are similar to humans and the elder races it's obvious, they have different ideas of community. What dragons do share was a deep and primal desire to collect valuable objects. This desire usually manifests as a large collection of gemstones, gold and valuables which the dragon collects all throughout its prodigiously long life. A dragon's horde is their pride and joy and they will go to great length to not only add to it but protect it from any outside forces—especially other dragons.

When the Conjunction first brought magic and creatures from other realms, dragons adapted. Unfortunately, as humans began multiplying and advancing, they began launching crusades against the dragons, claiming that dragons would wipe out human civilization entirely if given the chance. Many historians have noted that while the moral crusade against dragon had some validity, most dragon hunts were funded by jewelers' guilds. Thanks to the dragon's desire to horde, killing dragons was a very lucrative business; a savvy merchant could get a return on their investment that would make them rich for the rest of their life as long, as the hired muscled pulled through.

It didn't help that as more dragons were killed, alchemists began to discover that a dead dragon is a goldmine of alchemical ingredients and rare substances. Their teeth and tears were widely used in magical elixirs and medicines, their blood was highly sought after for cosmetics, and many people came to find a dragon's tail to be a delicacy when properly cooked.

## Fighting a Dragon

When hunting parties would hunt dragons, it was done in groups of 20 or more, and every tool of the trade from nets, to poison, to bear traps were used. In general, the plan was to either poison the dragon to death or pin it down as soon as possible.

In the cases that true dragons attacked human or elder folk settlements, sorcerers were relied upon as the primary line of defense. Walls were useless against any form of true dragon, and soldiers could do little

to a true dragon without forcing it to land. A sorcerer or sorceress could stand atop the walls of the city and use the forces of magic to strike the beast down. In some cases, this was successful; but in most cases, the mage would just run the dragon off.

If you have to face a true dragon in combat, the first thing to watch out for is its breath. Though each dragon has its own effect, the breath of a dragon is always dangerous and being caught directly in the blast will kill any warrior. Luckily, after a dragon uses its breath there is a small window of time where it cannot use this attack. This is when you should come out from whatever cover you managed to find and attack. A dragon's jaws and claws are extremely dangerous but not nearly as dangerous as their breath. A sweeping blow from a dragon's claws can lop the heads off of multiple opponents, so make sure to be well armored or on your toes. A dragon should, under no circumstances be allowed to get off the ground. Once in the air, a dragon can swoop down on targets and maintain air superiority. It is extremely difficult to knock a dragon from the air once it has taken flight, so you may have to lure it to the ground by taking shelter somewhere it can't get to while flying.

Trying to light a dragon on fire is a useless task, as they are hardened to flames and any bleeding wound caused by a blade or spell will seal too soon after being made. The best option is perhaps to freeze the beast and slow it up to keep it from devouring you and your companions. Often words are your best weapon.

## "Talking"

True dragons don't have lips and their long, forked tongues make forming words difficult. However, all dragons are capable of communicating with sapient creatures using telepathy. This telepathy allows the dragon to bridge language barriers and speak to multiple creatures as though they were speaking normally.

## Lounging in a Place of Power

True dragons are among a very few creatures on the Continent that can absorb magical energy. Strangely enough, one of the only other known creatures with this ability is the humble cat. To this day, no one knows why dragons absorb magical energy or what they do with that power. Some mages have speculated that they use it to fuel their magical abilities, but this has never been proven. Unsurprisingly, no mage has yet been able to convince a true dragon to carry out a scientific experiment regarding the source of their powers.

Mages have been able to observe that true dragons like to lounge around places of power. It's not unusual to find a dragon's lair built around a confluence of earth magic deep in a cave, or high on a mountain at a confluence of air magic. With no knowledge of what this power is used for, many scholars have taken to assuming that true dragons simply enjoy the feeling of magic, perhaps like a human huddles close to a warm hearth in the winter.



Skill Base	
Athletics	22
Awareness	17
Brawling	21
Charisma	17
Courage	20
Deceit	16
Education	17
Endurance	28
Human Perception	17
Intimidation	18
Persuasion	17
Physique	30
Resist Coercion	20
Resist Magic	20
Stealth	14
Wilderness Survival	16

<b>Armor</b>	25
<b>Regeneration</b>	—

Resistances	
—	
Immunities	
Bleeding, Knock-Down, Fire	

Susceptibilities	
Draconid Oil	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	24
<b>Reposition Base</b>	22
<b>Block Base</b>	23

Bounty	
5000	

Loot	
Dragon Tears (x2d10)	
Dragon Teeth (x4d10)	
Dragon Blood (x5d10)	
Dragon Tail (x2d10)	
The Dragon's Horde	



**Exceptional Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*

INT	7
REF	14
DEX	13
BODY	20
SPD	10
EMP	8
CRA	5
WILL	10

STUN	10
RUN	30
LEAP	12
STA	80
ENC	500
REC	16
HP	150

<b>Height</b>	6m
<b>Weight</b>	4000kg
<b>Environment</b>	Mountains & forests
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# True Dragon

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:14)

*There's been more talk of dragons recently, what with the dragon sightin's 'round the pontar. I even heard from a reliable source that the famed Virgin of Aedirn, Saskia was a dragon herself! And if that's the case we'd better all be on our toes! I'd heard of the tales of Queen Meve and the red dragon, Keltulis but I never knew dragons could take human form! Heh, thought they were dangerous enough when they just breathed goutts of flame hot enough to melt stone and knocked down castle walls with their claws! I don't doubt the kingdoms of the North'll be keepin' their gold and jewels under a tight lock and key. After all, dragons live for two things: killin' knights and collectin' plunder, heh.*

—Rodolf Kazmer



Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	23	P	10d6	20	—	Crushing Force, Long Reach, Armor Piercing, Ablating	1
Claw Slash	23	S	8d6	20	—	Crushing Force, Long Reach, Bleed (75%), Knock-Down (50%), Ablating	3
Wing Buffet	23	B	5d6+3	15	—	Crushing Force, Long Reach, Knock-Down (75%), Stun (-2)	2

### Pounce

By taking its movement action, a true dragon can leap 6m from a standing start. This leap can be made horizontally or vertically.

### Telepathy

A true dragon can communicate telepathically with any character it can see within a mile of itself. This telepathy crosses language barriers and allows the target to respond in their mind if they choose.

### Flight

As long as its wings remain, a true dragon can take its movement action to move 30m either horizontally or vertically. While in the air, a true dragon must use repositions to defend. The true dragon can only be knocked out of the air by stunning it or doing more than 20 points of damage with an attack. If the true dragon is knocked out of the air it must make a DC:25 Athletics check or take falling damage based on how far it fell.

While flying, a true dragon can split its movement, allowing it to fly a certain number of meters, make its attack, and then move the remaining number of meters in its movement.

### Breath

By taking its full turn, a true dragon can breath a 10m cone of magical fire. Anyone in this area must make a reposition roll (if they are able to either move behind cover, or get out of the area) against the dragon's attack roll, which has a base 20. If a person in that area has a pavise, they can use a block defense to deploy their pavise as cover. However, the pavise takes 1d10 ablation damage. If anyone in the area of the true dragon's fire fails to defend against the fire breath, they are lit on **fire** and take 7d6 damage to all body locations. Even if armor soaks this damage, the armor is ablated by 2 points. Once the true dragon has used its Fire Breath Ability it must cool down and cannot use this ability again for 5 rounds.

*“I’ve had to fight a dragon only once in my past. The dragon, an old brown dragon named Fetanahuir, had taken up residence in the Kestrel Mountains where Ghelibol now stands. It might not have been a problem were it not for the trade route between Redania and Kaedwen that passed through his territory. Fetanahuir had claimed the pass and anyone who even went near it was summarily executed by the wyrm’s claws. This was not a fight to rush into. I spent 2 weeks studying the creature before I made my move. Fetanahuir was a perfect specimen but he had one weakness: an all-consuming hatred of necrophages.”*

*—Erland of Larvik*



# True Dragon Lifepath

Roll	Type
1-3	<b>Green Dragon</b> A green dragon's Bite attack gains a (100%) Poison chance as long as it does damage. When <b>poisoned</b> a creature takes 5 points of damage per round which is not ablated by armor. The creature also takes a -3 penalty to all tasks as long as they are <b>poisoned</b> . The green dragon's poison cannot be negated by Golden Oriole. It can only be ended by a Cleansing Ritual or a DC:25 Endurance check.
4-5	<b>Red Dragon</b> A red dragon's Fire breath deals 10d6 damage instead of 7d6. When a target takes damage from the red dragon's Fire Breath, its armor is ablated by half the total damage of the fire breath. If a target blocks with a shield, the shield takes damage as previously stated.
6-7	<b>Black Dragon</b> A black dragon has nearly impenetrable scales which give it resistance to Piercing, Slashing, Bludgeoning, Stun, and Fire. This armor and resistances also cannot be affected by Armor Piercing weapons or Improved Armor Piercing weapons and any armor ablation is halved (minimum 1).
8-9	<b>Brown Dragon</b> A brown dragon has the ability to burrow through sand, loose dirt, packed dirt, and rock at the same speed as it's SPD stat by taking its Movement action. While underground, the brown dragon can shake its body, forcing anyone within a 30m radius to make a DC:25 Athletics or Physique check or be knocked <b>prone</b> and forced to make a Stun Save at -3. Finally, a brown dragon can take its full action to burrow up out of the ground, forcing anyone within 10m of the dragon to defend against a DC of 25. If they fail, the target is knocked back 6m and takes 6d6 damage to the torso.
10	<b>White Dragon</b> Instead of dealing fire damage and lighting a target on <b>fire</b> , a white dragon's breath deals 7d6 ice damage and freezes anyone who fails to defend in a thick case of ice. This ice immobilizes the target and keeps them from taking actions. To break out of this ice, the target must make a DC:25 Physique check. Alternately, if someone deals 10 points of damage to the ice or 5 points of fire damage to ice it allows the person to break out. Any damage beyond the 10 points (or 5 points) required to break the ice is dealt to a random location on the target.

Roll	Age
1	<b>Young</b> This Dragon is a few decades old and has had 1 major life event. They have 5 Pick Up Skill Points to spend. Their horde is worth 5,000 Crowns.
2-3	<b>Young Adult</b> This Dragon is a few centuries old and has had 2 major life events. They have 10 Pick Up Skill Points to spend. Their horde is worth 10,000 Crowns.
4-5	<b>Adult</b> This Dragon is a few millennia old and has had 3 major life events. They have 15 Pick Up Skill Points to spend. Their horde is worth 15,000 Crowns.
6-10	<b>Elder</b> This Dragon is a more than 100,000 years old and has had 4 major life events. They have 20 Pick Up Skill Points to spend. Their horde is worth 25,000 Crowns.

Roll	Raising
1	This Dragon grew up fighting with siblings and other dragons, earning a number of bite and claws scars as trophies.
2	This Dragon grew up fighting humans and raiding cities. Their body is a jagged map of scars and broken weapons.
3	This Dragon grew up in the depths of their lair, collecting their horde and polishing their scales and claws.
4-7	This Dragon grew up sequestered away in the mountains and rarely encountered others giving them a wary gaze.
8	This Dragon was raised by a loving parent and enjoyed a peaceful childhood, reflected in their smooth scales.
9	This Dragon was traumatized as a youth and has never recovered, giving them a haggard, defensive posture.
10	This Dragon roamed the Continent and beyond as a youth and collected many eclectic trinkets that they wear.

Roll	Personality	Pride	Hatred	Horde
1	Secretive	Their personal style	Arrogance	Gemstones & Gold
2	Rebellious	Their physical strength	Society	Weapons & Armor
3	Violent	Their home	Feisty prey	Gemstones & Gold
4	Idealistic	Their lineage	Unchallenging prey	Pelts & Hunting Trophies
5	Contemplative	Their knowledge	Humans	Gemstones & Gold
6	Stern	Their accomplishments	Magic	Magic Paraphernalia
7	Deceptive	Their charisma	Disruptions to their lair	Gemstones & Gold
8	Friendly	Their material possessions	A specific elder race	Historical Records & Tomes
9	Arrogant	Their resiliency	Being harmed or slighted	Gemstones & Gold
10	Nervous	Their skills	A certain type of monster	Regal Statuary & Furniture



Roll	Life Events
1	<b>Gained Fame or Infamy</b> This Dragon's actions gained it great fame or infamy across the Continent. They may have helped a besiege army or perhaps they burned a city to the ground. They gain +5 Reputation.
2	<b>Found an Ancient Ruin</b> This Dragon discovered an ancient ruin to make its lair in. This lair is riddled with networks of hallways made by it's original inhabitants and is guarded by a golem, that the Dragon has learned to command.
3	<b>Became the Secret Patron of a Cult</b> This Dragon has gathered a small cult of followers who are loyal to a fault and believe the Dragon will grant them power. This Dragon has 20 cultists (Choose between any Humanoids) who follow its orders and will risk their lives.
4	<b>Collected a Relic</b> This Dragon came across a relic item in their travels and added it to their horde. This relic is the prized possession of the Dragon but it may lone it to any patrons or allies it may have who can use the relic.
5	<b>Made Life-Long Enemies with a Human Noble Family</b> This Dragon managed to make enemies with a human noble family at some point in it's life. This has lead to a feud between the Dragon and the noble's family that has lasted generations. The Noble's family are always harrying the Dragon.
6	<b>Their Horde was Stolen</b> This Dragon's horde was stolen by someone and they are searching for it. The culprit may have been another dragon, it may have been mercenaries, or any number of other options. Either way this Dragon is hunting for it's lost horde.
7	<b>Coexisted with a Village</b> This Dragon came to coexist with a nearby village or other settlement. The settlement respects the Dragon and likes having it nearby. They may be in a symbiotic relationship with the Dragon. They are invested in helping the Dragon.
8	<b>Migrated</b> This Dragon once lived in another lair somewhere else in the world. Something caused them to migrate to their current lair but their previous lair is still hidden away where they can return to it.
9	<b>Raided a Major City</b> This Dragon raided a major city on the Continent and stole thousands of crowns worth of treasure. Their name has gone down in the history of the Continent as a terrible monster. This Dragon gain +8 Reputation.
10	<b>Had a Child</b> This Dragon has a child that they either raised or are currently raising. Depending on your choice, this Dragon either has an adult child who they are in contact with or they have a young dragon in their lair at the moment.

Roll	Interests
1	<b>Keeping Pets</b> This Dragon enjoys keeping pets and has a small (1d6) group of pets (beasts) in its lair that follow its commands.
2	<b>People Watching</b> This Dragon enjoys watching the comings and goings of settlements near it's lair. They have two friends who live nearby.
3	<b>Linguistics</b> This Dragon enjoys studying linguistics and learning new languages. They gain +3 points in all languages.
4	<b>Military History</b> This Dragon enjoys studying military history and watching great battles. They gain +4 to Tactics.
5	<b>Banking</b> This Dragon is deeply involved in the local banks. They have many debtors who will do anything to pay off their debts.
6	<b>Traveling</b> This Dragon enjoys traveling and has see nearly every part of the map. They gain +6 points in the Well Traveled ability.
7	<b>Numismatics</b> This Dragon collects coins from all countries, regions, and races. They have a collection of coins
8	<b>Magical Study</b> This Dragon enjoys studying magical theory and places of power. They gain +6 points in the Magic Training ability.
9	<b>Hunting</b> This Dragon enjoys hunting for sport in the wild near their lair. They gain +6 points in the Practiced Paranoia ability.
10	<b>Debating Travelers</b> This Dragon enjoys debating with travelers and lecturing explorers. They gain +4 to Resist Coercion.

Roll	Combat Style
1-2	<b>Fire From Afar</b> This Dragon prefers to stay at a distance or in the air and use it's breath weapon to kill attackers.
3-4	<b>Swooping Strikes</b> This Dragon likes to stay airborne but fly down and attack before retuning to the sky.
5-6	<b>Languid Fighter</b> This Dragon doesn't like to engage in combat directly and hates to be hurt. If seriously hurt, it will stay at a distance.
7-8	<b>Collateral Damage</b> This Dragon enjoys destroying the surrounding area, trying to collapse buildings on enemies and make difficult terrain.
9-10	<b>Claws &amp; Fangs</b> This Dragon likes to get into melee combat and attack with its Claw Slash and Bite attacks.







# Higher Vampires

*I've had the pleasure of hunting a higher vampire once in my life. I could barely keep track of her, and when I managed to strike her, the wounds closed moments after opening. With a good deal of luck, I managed to trap her in a corner and bathe her in flames with Igni. Only when her bones were blackened did I dare stop.*

—Erland of Larvik



Among all the threats that were brought to the Continent by the Conjunction of the Spheres arguably the most dangerous is the higher vampire. While there are monsters that are technically more powerful, the unique combination of power, skill, intelligence, and speed makes these blood-drinking monsters more than a match for any witcher.

## The Origin of Higher Vampires

While no scholars have ever deciphered the origins of the higher vampire species, it is a known fact that they hail from some alternate realm that merged with the Continent during the Conjunction of the Spheres. This mysterious realm was likely dominated by the Higher Vampires, and populated with a number of different clans, cultures, and countries. Its make-up is alien with metals and other organic materials that don't naturally occur on the Continent. Likely, due to the largely nocturnal nature of most vampires, some have assumed that the vampires "Homeland" is a primarily dark or moonlit one.

When the first Higher Vampires were dropped unceremoniously onto the Continent, they, as well as many other vampire species, found themselves in the Toussaint region, near the foot of Mount Gorgon. At this time, the region was being cultivated by the Aen

Seidhe, who had begun to found a kingdom centered around a beautiful white marble city that would later come to be called "Beauclair." The Higher Vampires were left with no knowledge of the world they were stuck in and no idea of how to return to their homeland. Due to their shape shifting abilities and social graces, the vampires found blending into the Aen Seidhe society easy, though adjusting to the Elder Speech from their mother tongue took time.

Making due with their position, the Higher Vampires split into three tribes: each of which would take to a different section of their new home.

The Higher Vampires most commonly found on the Continent belong to the Gharasham Tribe. This tribe settled in the Tous-saint region, mingling with the Aen Seidhe and building their society in the shadows. The Tribes insignia, an open palm, marked with drops of blood at the fingertips and palm has been speculated to represents their willingness to assimilate with the culture of their new neighbors.

The Ammurun Tribe traveled west, eventually reaching the great sea and embarking on a great voyage to find new land. If the Ammurun were successful in finding a new home, scholars are unsure and no higher vampire has ever spoken on the subject. From their

## True Knowledge of Higher Vampires

True information regarding higher vampires is jealously guarded by the vampires themselves and it is rare that a non-vampire is told anything of vampire society. You must make a Monster Lore check (DC:25) to know the true lore of higher vampires.

## Tdet & Ammurun

Very little is known about the Tdet and Ammurun, even to the other Higher Vampires of the Gharasham tribe. In a way, they are much like the Ofieri and Zerrikanian people, or perhaps more accurately, the Haaklanders. If you want to bring in Tdet or Ammurun Higher Vampires, treat them like you would treat other foreigners on the Continent. Also remember that after so many centuries, they may not share the same culture as the Gharasham and may seem alien to them.



## Unique Abilities

Every higher vampire's special ability is unique to them. In the higher vampire Lifepath, we have provided in the following pages, there are only a few examples of special abilities that would work for a higher vampire. If you like, you can take a different special ability from any of the monsters in this bestiary or the bestiary in the Core Rule Book as the special ability of a higher vampire you are generating. Keep in mind though that most of these abilities were not created with the higher vampire in mind, so you should make sure to investigate how giving a higher vampire another monster's power would affect them.

insignia, a closed hand clutching a dagger and dripping blood, has been interpreted by some as a sign of a more militant outlook. Perhaps meaning trouble for the inhabitants of any western Continent they might have discovered.

The Tdet Tribe, ventured east, across the blue mountains, likely finding themselves in Zerrikania or perhaps the Haaklands. Their insignia, a hand with little finger and thumb folded in and a serpent coiled around it has remained as mysterious as much of the east itself. With no information from the Higher Vampires of the Gharasham Tribe, the Tdet remain a grand mystery.

## The Difference in Vampires

While some people are tempted to lump Higher Vampires in with the lesser vampires such as garkains and ekimmara that is among the costliest mistakes a person can make. While they share some commonalities—namely a desire to drink blood—Higher Vampires are as similar to a “lesser vampire” as a human is to a monkey.

Most lesser vampires are largely feral beasts with no drive other than survival, reproduction, and consuming blood. They are to all tense and purposes animals. Lesser vampires past the ekimara are sapient but still driven primarily by a lust for blood and often find it difficult to blend in with the society of other sapient races. Bruxa, Alps, and a rare few other lesser vampires are capable of maintaining human guises but they usually prefer to remain separate from other races whenever possible.

Higher Vampires on the other hand are usually integrated entirely into the society of the races around them. Unlike other races of vampire, Higher Vampires do not require blood to survive and they are not wounded or hampered by sunlight. Most higher vampires ingrate into human societies and often use their powers to find their way into a position of great power.

## Higher Vampire Society

Although Higher Vampires are entirely capable of integrating into the societies of humans and elves, they have maintained their own society for hundreds of years. And

a higher vampire is always more beholden to the rules of their own society than the laws of the non-vampires around them.

The most important aspect of higher vampire society is their kinship. Higher vampires maintain a tightly bounded kinship with each other largely stemming from the fact that only a higher vampire can pose a true threat to another higher vampire. If “killed” by anything but another of their kind, a higher vampire will eventually regenerate and “come back to life”. This has led to an iron-clad law amongst the Higher vampire species: No higher vampire is allowed to kill another. If a higher vampire does kill another of its kind that become anathema to vampire society and are outcast or punished by the society.

Beyond this distinction much of Higher vampire society is shrouded in mystery. Knowingly encountering a higher vampire is extremely rare and Higher Vampires do not usually open up about their culture to outsiders. The few known aspects of vampire culture are as follows.

Higher vampires do not have to drink blood to survive, but it does have a pleasant intoxicating effect on them. Most higher vampires have taken to drinking blood much like humans drink wine or beer. Some vampires abstain from blood in the same way a human might abstain from alcohol and others could be considered “alcoholics,” becoming irritable or aggressive when they haven't drunk in some time. Higher Vampires have a long tradition of “farming” humans and other sapient races for their blood and while the practice is less common now it is still practiced by some.

Higher vampires, and other sapient vampires appear to celebrate the arrival of the full moon and it is an important holiday for their culture. Many higher vampires will raid villages and get drunk on blood before partying through the night.

Lastly, and most mysteriously are the Unseen Elders of the Higher Vampires. These creatures, presumably ancient members of the species who have reached a later stage of growth, are the unrivaled rulers of higher vampire society. Unseen Elders are more powerful even than Higher Vampires and are rumored to have incon-



ceivable powers beyond the normal abilities of their species. They do not associate themselves with any race, and are rarely seen by the higher vampires themselves. If vampire society is under a great threat or some other extreme circumstance arises, higher vampire will disturb an Unseen Elder but only if there is no other option. Non-vampires may request an audience with an Unseen Elder by way of a very specific ritual known only to a few but even this ritual and sacrifice does not guarantee an audience. To all intents and purposes, the Unseen Elders are the gods of the vampires. Their commands cannot be denied by any vampires, higher or lesser, and they can call to a vampire telepathically over great distances. The limits of their strength are unknown and they are said to move so quickly not even a witcher's mutated eye can perceive their movements. Luckily, these god-like creatures are generally uninterested in anything outside their realm and have never been seen or documented by non-vampires.

## Modern Higher Vampires

These days Higher Vampires are exceptionally rare and generally stick close together. For the Gharasham this means close to Toussaint, where they first arrived. They live reasonably quiet lives and most attempt to stay hidden among humans to avoid being branded monsters and constantly attacked. While many higher vampires still see non-vampires as cattle or vermin a select few recognize that they are unwilling immigrants to the Continent and that it belongs to the non-vampires.

Likely if you live nowhere near Toussaint you will never encounter a higher vampire. Even if you live in Toussaint you may never meet a higher vampire or never know you have met one.

## Hunting Higher Vampires

If you must, for some reason, hunt a higher vampire there are a few things to keep in mind if you want to have any chance of survival. Firstly, a higher vampire is difficult to spot and separate from humans. Their guise is perfect, they do not register to a witcher's Medallion and they are usually well integrated into the society around them. The best way to spot a higher vampire is to catch them in front of a mirror or under the light of the sun. A higher

vampire will not show in a mirror and they do not cast a shadow. Once you have found a higher vampire you should first prove they are a higher vampire before attacking them to ease confusion and panic among civilians.

Secondly, a vampire's magical influence is substantial and subtle. A Higher vampire can influence a target magically by simply speaking to them. This can give the vampire quite a bit of power in many situations.

Thirdly, you must remember that a higher vampire is super human in almost every aspect of their physique. They are faster, stronger, and more dexterous than any human could hope to be. Beyond this, they have the ability to transform their bodies, becoming invisible, transforming into mist, and even transforming into a bat like form which grants them significant combat prowess.

Lastly, the higher vampire's regenerative abilities are exponentially greater than those of any other monster. A higher vampire can heal from any wound given enough time and can even regrow limbs, including their own head. Even if you are able to negate a higher vampire's healing with a moondust Bomb, they will still begin regenerating the moment the effect wears off, even if they are dead. Unless you are a higher vampire you can never truly kill a higher vampire and the likelihood of convincing another vampire to become anathema is extremely low unless the vampire you want to kill is a grave threat to vampire society.

One tact that is universally effective on vampires is Black Blood potion. This potion can be used to poison a higher vampire and weaken their regenerative ability if they try to drink your blood. Alternatively, you can impose the effects of poisons and drugs affecting you onto a higher vampire by coercing them to drink your blood. If even that fails, simply coercing a higher vampire to drink a great deal of blood will intoxicate them, making them easier to fight.

## Higher Vampire Nemesis

When used properly, Higher Vampires can be excellent nemeses for player characters. Keep in mind though that the characters can never really permanently defeat the higher vampire without the aid of another higher vampire. A higher vampire nemesis should be more of a Moriarty to your characters Sherlock Holmes. They may not actively try to kill the character, but they hinder them and hound them. This may escalate into active combat, but the higher vampire might choose not to kill the character so they can continue their tête-à-tête. If the characters do get the upper hand on the higher vampire, the higher vampire returns a certain time later, now more devoted to attacking or hindering the characters.



Skill Base	
Athletics	26
Awareness	20
Brawling	24
Charisma	17
Courage	20
Deceit	17
Endurance	19
Intimidation	20
Persuasion	17
Physique	20
Resist Coercion	18
Resist Magic	20
Seduction	18
Social Etiquette	18
Stealth	20
Wilderness Survival	19

<b>Armor</b>	8
<b>Regeneration</b>	20

Resistances	
Magical Charms	
Immunities	
Silver, Magical Scanning, Fire	

Susceptibilities	
Vampire Oil, Black Blood Potion	

<b>Dodge Base</b>	25
<b>Reposition Base</b>	26
<b>Block Base</b>	24

Bounty	
5000	

Loot	
Abomination Lymph (x1d6/2)	
Naezan Salts (x1d10)	
Higher Vampire Fangs (x1d6/3)	
Essence of Death (x3d10)	



**Exceptional Complex**

**Intelligence**  
*Sapient*

**Senses**  
*Night Vision*  
*Scent Tracking*

INT	10
REF	15
DEX	16
BODY	12
SPD	12
EMP	8
CRA	7
WILL	8

STUN	10
RUN	36
LEAP	7
STA	60
ENC	120
REC	12
HP	100



<b>Height</b>	1.8m
<b>Weight</b>	75kg
<b>Environment</b>	Settlements
<b>Organization</b>	Solitary

# Higher Vampire

## Commoner Superstition (Education DC:18)

There're people in the south who believe there's a secret cabal of powerful vampires operatin' throughout the Continent. They seem to think these vampires're connected like some kinda web. Pullin' strings and manipulin' all castes of people. Met a lad who swore that some great clan of vampires came durin' the Conjunction and set up shop near mount gorgon, heh. Seems a little crazy to me but what do I know. Only vampire I've ever seen was a plumard. Heh, all I know is, a vampire might be stronger and faster than a mortal, they might heal from any wound a mundane can inflict but a silver stake through the heart'll still put 'em in the grave!

—Rodolf Kazmer



Attacks							
Name	ATK Base	Type	DMG	Rel.	RNG	Effect	ROF
Bite	24	P	6d6	15	—	Bleed (100%), Improved Armor Piercing, Drain Blood	1
Claw Slash	24	P/S	5d6+3	15	—	Bleed (75%), Balanced	4

### Vulnerability: Fire Magic

Higher vampires are not immune to fire spells and take damage normally from any source of fire that was generated by magic. Damage resulting from the **fire** condition never effects a higher vampire.

### Vulnerability: No Reflection or Shadow

A higher vampire's reflection doesn't appear in mirrors. Similarly, a higher vampire doesn't cast a shadow when lit by any form of illumination.

### Vulnerability: Aversely Affected By Blood

If a vampire drains more than 20 points of blood from any number of targets within 1 hour, they become **intoxicated** for the next hour.

### Ability: Immortal

As well as its standard regeneration, a higher vampire can regenerate from critical wounds and even death. At the beginning of every round the higher vampire heals 20 points of damage and also heals 1 round worth of critical wounds. It takes 1 turn for a higher vampire to heal a Simple Critical Wound, 2 turns for a Complex Critical Wound, 4 rounds for a Difficult Critical Wound, and 6 rounds to heal a Deadly Critical Wound. The higher vampire must apply its regeneration to one critical wound at a time, starting with the simple wounds. On the first round regeneration is applied to a wound, it is considered stabilized.

### Ability: Drain Blood

If a higher vampire's Bite attack deals damage to a target, the higher vampire drains 2d6 Health Points from the target and heals the same number of Health Points.

If a higher vampire is killed by someone other than another higher vampire, they return to life a number of weeks later equal to the number of negative Health Points they have when they die. A second higher vampire can cut this time in half by feeding they corpse their blood once a day.

### Ability: Superior Invisibility

By taking its action, a higher vampire can turn invisible. This grants the vampire +10 to Stealth and +5 to attack and defense. Even if you make your Awareness check to spot the vampire, the vampire still gains a +3 to attack and defense. Yrden or a Moondust Bomb can make a vampire semi-visible, reducing its Stealth bonus to +5 and its attack bonus to +3. Striking the vampire forces it to become visible.

### Transformation: Mutable Form

Without taking an action, a higher vampire can transform its body to look identical to a human. If the higher vampire uses any of its attacks or drains blood, they revert to their more bestial humanoid form.

Alternatively, by taking its action, a higher vampire can transform into a cloud of smoke or a giant bat.

While in its smoke form, the higher vampire can take its move action to move either horizontally or vertically and it is considered **Incorporeal**. If the higher vampire attacks something it returns to its standard form immediately. While in its bat form, the higher vampire can still take its move action to move either horizontally or vertically but is not considered Incorporeal. Additionally, the higher vampire loses its Superior Invisibility Ability but treats its Armor Stopping Power as 12.

### Ability: Magical Influence

By taking its action, a higher vampire can influence the mind of anyone who can hear them. The target of the higher vampire's influence must make a Resist Magic check against the higher vampire's attack at base of 20. If the target fails, they agree with the higher vampire and feel the way the higher vampire wants them to. This effect lasts for 10 minutes or until the target is able to make a Resist Magic check that beats the higher vampire's original roll by taking an action.



# Higher Vampire Lifepath

Roll	Ability
1	<b>Command Vampires</b> The Vampire can use its action to command up to 10 vampires within 20m of them. These vampires will follow the higher vampire's orders to the letter as best they can. If the order would get the lesser vampire killed, they are able to roll a Resist Magic check at a DC:25. If they fail, they carry out the command.
2	<b>Magical Talent</b> This Vampire can cast a single spell. They gain a Base Spellcasting of 16, a Vigor Threshold of 15 and access to 1 Journeyman Mage Spell. This Vampire cannot learn new magic.
3	<b>Cause Nightmares</b> The Vampire can take its action to instill terrible nightmares in a target they can see within 10m. The target must beat a DC:25 Resist Magic check or be affected. These nightmares seem just like real life to the target and the Vampire can control the nightmare and view what the target does in the nightmare. The next morning the target regains half the Hit Points they would have normally and doesn't regain any Stamina.
4	<b>Drain Lifeforce</b> The Vampire can use an action to drain the vitality of a target by rolling at a base 20 against a target they are grappling. If the target fails to beat this roll with Resist Magic the vampire drains 3d10 Stamina from the target and regenerate that amount of Stamina.
5	<b>Summon Ravens</b> The Vampire can use its action to summon 2d6 ravens that will fight for it to the death. These ravens act on the vampire's turn and use the bird stat block.
6	<b>Psychic Pulse</b> The Vampire can use a full round to create a psychic pulse. Anyone within 6m of the vampire must make a DC:25 Resist Magic check or be <b>staggered</b> for 2d6 rounds and takes a -3 to Awareness due to their vision doubling and shifting. If a target who is <b>staggered</b> by the vampire's Psychic Pulse fails to defend against another Psychic Pulse they are <b>stunned</b> .
7	<b>Blood Rage</b> The Vampire can enter a blood rage as a free action. While in this blood rage (which lasts until the Vampire chooses to exit it by taking a full turn to calm down), the Vampire is immune to charm and resistant to <b>stun</b> but must attack anything nearby.
8	<b>Summon Fog</b> The Vampire can use its action to summon a deep, dark fog. This wave of fog fills an area (with a 30m radius) initially centered on the vampire. Anyone (save for the vampire) in this fog is unable to see anything that is farther than 4m from them. By spending an action, the vampire can move the fog 10m. This fog lasts 24 hours or until the vampire uses an action to dismiss it. A Mage can attempt to dispel this fog, by spending 10 STA points and taking an action to roll a Spellcasting check (DC:25).
9	<b>Mimic Voice</b> The Vampire can mimic the voice of anyone it has heard in the last 24 hours. It can mimic the vocal patterns of a person as long as it heard the person speak a full sentence. The vampire can say anything in that voice and anyone hearing it must make a DC:25 Resist Coercion check or be convinced. If a person has never met the person the vampire is mimicking, they cannot roll Resist Coercion.
10	<b>Weave Illusions</b> The Vampire can use its action to create an illusion within 30m of themselves. This illusion can be incredibly detailed and show anything the vampire chooses to depict. No matter what is depicted, it is still an illusion and cannot interact with anything. The illusion has no sound, smell, or feel. If a creature sees the vampire's illusion they can choose to make an Awareness check (DC:25) to realize it is an illusion.

Roll	Age
1-2	<b>Young</b> This Vampire is a few decades old and has had 1 major life event. They have 5 Pick Up Skill Points to spend.
3-5	<b>Young Adult</b> This Vampire is a few centuries old and has had 3 major life events. They have 15 Pick Up Skill Points to spend.
6-10	<b>Adult</b> This Vampire is a several centuries old and has had 5 major life events. They have 25 Pick Up Skill Points to spend.

Roll	Raising
1	This Vampire grew up far from human society and among non-humans. They have interacted with elves more than humans and their "human" form look more elven.
2	This Vampire grew up hunting non-vampires and rarely attempting to blend in, giving them a palpable predatory aura. They likely have a hard time thinking of non-vampires as anything but prey.
3-5	This Vampire grew up in a human society and follows the local styles and mannerisms. They are full integrated into the local society and may even live as a normal civilian among the other citizens of a city.
6-8	This Vampire grew up among other vampires and rarely dealt with non-vampires causing them to be aloof to non-vampires. They are more concerned with vampire society than the plights of non-vampires.
9	This Vampire grew up outcast from Vampire society and barred from any territories claimed by the higher vampire Tribes. They have lived on the move giving them a bedraggled look.
10	This Vampire grew up among royalty, either in vampire society or non-vampire society. They wear fine clothing and appreciate jewelry and finery.

Roll	Personality	Pride	Hatred	Thoughts on Blood
1	Secretive	Their personal style	Arrogance	Abstaining from blood
2	Rebellious	Their physical strength	Society	Has to be convinced to drink
3	Violent	Their home	Feisty Prey	Drinks once or twice a week
4	Idealistic	Their lineage	Unchallenging prey	Social Drinker
5	Contemplative	Their knowledge	Humans	Social Drinker
6	Stern	Their accomplishments	Magic	Social Drinker
7	Deceptive	Their charisma	False Vampire Lore	Social Drinker
8	Friendly	Their material possessions	A specific elder race	Drinks a bit too heavily at parties
9	Arrogant	Their resiliency	Being harmed or slighted	Drinks every night
10	Nervous	Their skills	People who hurt their friends.	Blood Addicted



Roll	Life Events
1	<b>Adopted a Child</b> This Vampire recently adopted a child that they are currently raising. They genuinely care about this child and will go out of their way to protect them. This vampire may even risk their life for this child.
2	<b>Has a Romance Outside their Species</b> This Vampire is in a committed affair with someone outside of their species. This person is dear to the vampire and is in fairly constant contact with them. The Vampire tries to visit them often and would risk their life for them.
3	<b>Made a Lifelong Enemy in Vampire Society</b> This Vampire did something to earn the ire of another higher vampire in their society. The rules of higher vampire society have kept this conflict from coming to violence but only barely.
4	<b>Fought a Witcher</b> This Vampire has fought witchers before and they know their tricks. Over years of careful training, they have built up an immunity to Black Blood Potion and are no longer affected by it.
5	<b>Keeps a Monster as a "Pet"</b> This Vampire keeps one Feral, Medium-Threat monster or 3 Feral Easy-Threat monsters as a pets in its lair. This monster has been trained extensively and follows the vampire's orders. They will not fight to the death for the Vampire.
6	<b>Was "Killed"</b> This Vampire torn apart or burned down to slag. They had to regenerate over many years. The years of silent darkness have driven this vampire to avoid death at all cost. This Vampire regenerates twice as fast when below zero health points.
7	<b>Went on a Bender</b> This Vampire succumbed to their desire for blood and went on a bender, draining tens of civilians and wiping out a village. Their actions brought more scrutiny on other Higher Vampires. They have -3 Reputation with Higher Vampires.
8	<b>Gained Fame or Infamy</b> Something this Vampire did gained them fame or infamy across the Continent. This reputation may be as a vampire or people who hear of these deeds may think the vampire is a human or elf. They gain +5 Reputation.
9	<b>Leads a Cabal</b> This Vampire has rallied a small group of non-vampires around their cause (whatever that cause may be). The followers of this cause (30 Humanoids) may or may not know that this vampire is a vampire.
10	<b>Knighted for Their Actions</b> This Vampire, under their guise as a human, was honored for some action they took on behalf of the local ruler. They gain +5 Reputation and are considered a knight in the realm surrounding their lair.

Roll	Interests
1	<b>Commerce</b> This vampire runs a business and enjoys participating in the local commerce. They make 200 crowns every week.
2	<b>Alchemy</b> This vampire is skilled in alchemy and maintains an alchemy lab with 5 formulae that grants a +3 to their Alchemy checks.
3	<b>Art</b> This vampire is a consummate artist and enjoys creating art for galleries. They have a workshop that grants +3 Fine Arts.
4	<b>Solving Mysteries</b> This vampire enjoys puzzles and solving local mysteries. They have 3 close friends within the local guard.
5	<b>"Farming"</b> This vampire practices the age-old-art of farming. They have a farm hidden away with 30 humans they can feed on.
6	<b>Gambling</b> This vampire lives for the thrill of gambling and they have many debtors throughout the area who owe them favors.
7	<b>Sailing</b> This vampire enjoys sailing the open sea or the rivers of the Continent. They own a sailing ship and has a crew.
8	<b>Riding</b> This vampire races horses in their spare time and has become a great racer. They have a horse with a racing saddle.
9	<b>Brewing</b> This vampire owns a vineyard that produces the appropriate type of alcohol and earns them 600 crowns per month.
10	<b>Physical Fitness</b> This vampire is devoted to its physical health, training its body extensively. They gain +10 Health Points.

Roll	Combat Style
1	<b>Hunter</b> This Vampire prefers stalking their target and hunt them with a ranged weapon. They treat combat as more of a sport.
2	<b>Elegant</b> This Vampire likes to show off as they fight. They try to perform special attacks like disarming, tripping, and grappling.
3	<b>Berserker</b> This Vampire is vicious when it fights, trying to close immediately with one target and tear it to shreds with their claws.
4	<b>Subterfuge</b> This Vampire prefers to poison its target, take their friends hostage, or undermine to get what they want.
5	<b>Assassin</b> This Vampire prefers to assassinate their target by waiting for an opportunity and they attacking from the shadows.
6	<b>Blood Starved</b> This Vampire feels a powerful need to drink blood when they see their target bleed. They prefer to bite their target.



# Components

## Crushed Crystalized Essence

Crystalized Essence is composed of crystalized infused dust. This means that by taking 15 minutes and making a DC:10 Crafting check, you can destroy one unit of Crystalized Essence and create 2 units of infused dust.

## Foraging For Burdok

Burdok Root can be found in fields and forests. It has a Rarity rating of Poor and a Forage DC of 16. If you successfully forage for Burdok Root you find 1d6 Units.

## Beast Leather













































While most of the leather on the Continent is made from cow hide, leather can be made from a number of other hides and pelts. If you don't have access to cow hide or perhaps you just want a bit of flair to your armor or weapon, you can make other animal hides or pelts into leather.

Name	Source	Weight	Cost
Bear Hide	Bears	6	30
Boar Pelt	Boars	2	10
Panther Hide	Panthers	3	38

## Alchemical Components

Name	Substance	Symbol	Source	Weight	Cost
Abomination Lymph	Quebrith		Bruxa, Garkains	0.1	152
Archespore Juice	Vitriol		Archespores	0.1	38
Archespore Tendrils	Quebrith		Archespores	0.5	44
Barbegazi Fur	Hydragenum		Barbegazi	0.1	21
Barghest Essence	Vermilion		Barghest	0.1	36
Bear Fat	Rebis		Bears	0.5	90
Boar Tusks	Vitriol		Boars	0.1	82
Bohun Upas Poison	Vermilion		Manticores	0.1	200
Botchling Blood	Vitriol		Botchlings	0.1	66
Botchling Bones	Hydragenum		Botchlings	0.1	55
Botchling Brain	Caelum		Botchlings	0.1	164
Botchling Ear	Fulgur		Botchlings	0.1	100
Bruxa Blood	Vitriol		Bruxa	0.1	97
Bullvore Blood	Rebis		Bullvores	0.1	85
Bullvore Brain	Fulgur		Bullvores	1	150
Bullvore Eyes	Vitriol		Bullvores	0.5	87
Burdok Root	Vermilion		Fields & forests	.1	32
Cockatrice Carapace	Hydragenum		Cockatrice	2	75
Cockatrice Stomach	Vermilion		Cockatrice	1	92
Cockatrice Tail Feathers	Aether		Cockatrice	0.1	135
Crystallized Essence	Hydragenum		Hyms, Pesta, Vendigos, Leshen, Cyclopeses	0.1	292
Cyclops' Bones	Aether		Cyclopeses	4	87
Cyclops' Brain	Rebis		Cyclopeses	2	136
Cyclops' Eye	Vermilion		Cyclopeses	1	159
Cyclops' Tongue	Fulgur		Cyclopeses	1	90
Dragon Blood	Rebis		True Dragons	1	250



Name	Substance	Symbol	Source	Weight	Cost
Dragon Tail	Hydragenum		True Dragons	4	310
Dragon Tears	Sol		True Dragons	.1	276
Dragon Teeth	Fulgur		True Dragons	1	192
Elemental Stone	Quebrith		All Elementals	0.5	134
Essence of Fire	Sol		Phoenixes, Fire Elementals	0.1	46
Foglet Essence	Aether		Foglets	0.1	43
Foglet Teeth	Rebis		Foglets	0.1	40
Frightener Claws	Fulgur		Frighteners	5	205
Frightener Eyes	Sol		Frighteners	0.1	192
Garkain Saliva	Quebrith		Garkains	0.1	70
Giant Centipede Discharge	Caelum		Giant Centipedes	0.1	40
Giant Centipede Mandibles	Vitriol		Giant Centipedes	0.5	48
Godling Eyes	Aether		Godlings	0.1	55
Harpy Eggs	Quebrith		Harpy Nests	0.5	50
Harpy Feathers	Vermilion		Harpies	0.1	28
Harpy Talons	Caelum		Harpies	0.1	40
Higher Vampire Fangs	Fulgur		Higher Vampires	0.1	250
Knocker Hair	Quebrith		Knockers	0.1	33
Knocker Teeth	Vermilion		Knockers	0.1	46
Knocker Toes	Rebis		Knockers	0.1	62
Leshen Bone	Hydragenum		Leshen	1	92
Leshen Fiber	Vermilion		Leshen	0.1	106
Leshen Resin	Vitriol		Leshen	0.1	140
Manticore Fangs	Vitriol		Manticores	0.1	132
Manticore Horn	Hydragenum		Manticores	1	120
Manticore Stomach	Quebrith		Manticores	2	189
Manticore Wing Membranes	Sol		Manticores	2	145
Naezan Salts	Aether		Bruxa	0.1	146
Phoenix Ash	Sol		Phoenixes	0.1	94
Phoenix Feathers	Fulgur		Phoenixes	0.1	176
Plumard Stomach	Aether		Plumards	0.1	30
Rotfiend Blood	Rebis		Rotfiends	0.1	30
Rotfiend Liver	Caelum		Rotfiends	0.5	42
Shaelmaar Dust	Rebis		Shaelmaar	0.1	79
Shaelmaar Hair	Caelum		Shaelmaar	0.1	100
Slyzard Scales	Fulgur		Slyzards	3	82
Slyzard Talons	Caelum		Slyzards	0.5	69
Slyzard Vocal Chords	Vitriol		Slyzards	0.1	99
Succubus Heart	Vermilion		Succubi	0.5	95
Succubus Horn	Caelum		Succubi	0.5	87
Troll Tongue	Aether		Trolls	0.1	66
Wing Membrane	Rebis		Garkains, Plumards	0.5	36
Vendigo Fur	Fulgur		Vendigo	0.1	76
Vendigo Heart	Aether		Vendigo	1	167

## Butchering Monsters

Ya ever tried cuttin' the lymphs out of a cut-up corpse? It ain't easy, lemme tell ya! Here I am, with Ealdred, stooped over a bloody corpse that's still smolderin', tryin' to make fine little cuts in its leathery skin without knickin' the little lymphs on the other side. Heh, I could barely keep my hands still!

—Rodolf Kazmer



# Mutagens



## Botchling Mutagens

Heh, gotta admit never seen the appeal in mutatin' yerself with monster parts and whatnot. Perfectly happy bein' a dwarf myself and I ain't interested in rollin' the dice! Heh, 'specially since there're so many mutagens from gnarly critters like the botchlin'. If ya put a knife to my throat I guess I could see mutatin' myself with a griffin or a manticore or somethin'. But lord knows I can't imagine gettin' any part of a botchlin' anywhere near me! Makes me sick just to think of a witcher getting' the mutagen in the first place, heh.

—Rodolf Kazmer

Mutagen Source	Effect	Alchemy DC	Minor Mutation
<b>Red Mutagens</b>			
Botchling	+2 Melee Damage	18	Cleft palate & reddened sclera
Cockatrice	+2 Melee Damage	18	Patches of green feathers
Manticore	+1 REF	22	Small horns & feline features
Phoenix	+3 Melee Damage	20	Patches of grey feathers & an internal glow
Vendigo	+3 Melee Damage	20	Patchy fur & sickly grey skin
<b>Green Mutagens</b>			
Bear	+10 HP	20	Prolific fur growth
Bullvore	+10 HP	20	Hard growths all over the body
Frightener	+1 BODY	22	Multi-faceted eyes & patches of chitin
Garkain	+10 HP	20	Fleshy growths on the head
Shaelmaar	+10 HP	20	Patches of thick rock textured skin
Succubus	+5 HP	18	Small horns and a tail
Troll	+5 HP	18	Blue-ish skin leathery skin
<b>Blue Mutagens</b>			
Bruxa	+1 WILL	22	Semi-translucent skin & a hissing voice
Elemental	+3 Vigor Threshold	20	<b>Earth:</b> Rocky growths along your body <b>Fire:</b> Small spouts of fire from your mouth <b>Ice:</b> You are always cold to the touch
Foglet	+2 Vigor Threshold	18	A weak internal glow & gaunt features
Leshen	+1 WILL	22	Plants growth on the body
Pesta	+2 Vigor Threshold	18	Sickly, pale skin & gaunt features



# Investigation

*“There are few monster that will leave a direct sign of their presence. Many share habits and methods of attack and others look visually similar to mutations of their species. A large part of a successful witcher’s training is acute and in-depth investigation.”*

—Erland of Larvik



Mysteries can represent a challenge for a Game Master. The need to present a series of Clues that leads to a specific conclusion often feels like it conflicts with a desire to let players take the lead and steer the story in the direction they desire. Mysteries also walk a tight-rope between player intelligence and character intelligence, since finding the solution often relies more on the ability of players than the player characters to piece together the Clues presented, which can ruin immersion. At the same time, turning a mystery into just a set of skill checks to represent player character ability can be unsatisfying.

The following Investigation isn’t designed to replace roleplaying with a dice rolling mini-game but to give GMs and players specific goals and actions to help them define the purpose of the investigation, how and when the investigation can succeed or fail, and offer them a better understanding of what possible actions can help or hinder the investigation. The system also presents a way for players who aren’t as clever at deduction as their characters are to solve mysteries based on their characters’ skills and not just the players’ own puzzling abilities. The system allows the GMs to lay out mysteries without worrying about their skill at creating an absolutely perfect trail of breadcrumbs, false Clues, and logical conundrums.

## Focus

Each character taking part in an Investigation has Focus, which represents their ability to dedicate their attention and mental prowess to solving the mystery.

$$\text{Focus} = [(WILL + INT)/2] \times 3$$

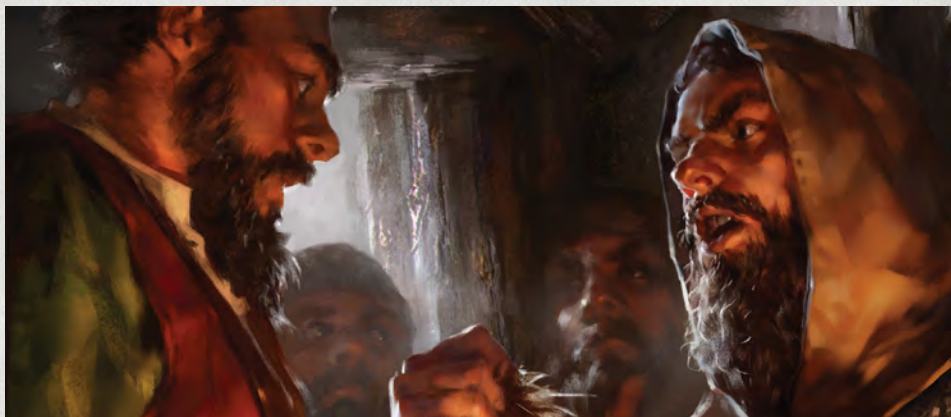
During an Investigation, Focus can be drained by failing Evidence checks or due to Obstacles. When a character’s Focus drops to 0, their mind is a muddled mess and unable to make sense of the clues or concentrate on the mystery. Until they raise their Focus above 0, they can’t make any further Evidence checks.

A character’s Focus is not unique to the mystery they are investigating. If they are trying to solve more than one mystery, damage caused by actions involving each one subtracts from the same Focus.

## Why Are We Talking About Mysteries in a Bestiary?

Good question! And the answer comes from the lore. Witchers aren’t just mutant killing machines. A good witcher is also a detective. They know charging after a monster without knowing what they’re dealing with is a good way to end up dead, so they do their homework first. They question victims and witnesses, examine bodies, search for tracks, and try to figure out what they’re dealing with so they can recruit the right allies, craft the right oils, and purchase the right weapons before they go charging into the fight.

The Investigation system provides GMs with the rules they need to give Witchers and their allies the tools they need to simulate that aspect of the Witcher world. It also happens to be great tool to solve murder mysteries, and unravel conspiracies, all of which are integral parts of the Dark World of *The Witcher*.





## Long Term Mysteries

When solving a mystery, player characters don't always have to commit to the task doggedly, making the maximum possible number of Evidence checks each day. While some mysteries may demand such dedication, others are situational and specifically long term. A character looking for her lover's killer, for instance, may make a single Evidence check every time she reaches a new city or town. If what she discovers opens up new, immediate avenues of investigation she can keep investigating. Otherwise, she'll have to wait to follow up later. Long term mysteries, spooled out a few Clues at a time, represent a great way to make the game personal for the characters and keep their interest.

## Mysteries

Before an Investigation begins, the mystery needs to be defined. Every mystery has a Goal, a Complexity, a series of Clues, and Obstacles.

A mystery's Goal dictates its purpose and end goal. Examples include Find the person who murdered the mayor, Identify the monster that attacked the village, and Puzzle out the formula for an alchemical substance.

A mystery's **Complexity** represents how much work is involved in solving the mystery and is a number which acts like Health Points. Each time a character gathers a Clue, they roll Damage and subtract that number from the mystery's Complexity. When an Investigation's Complexity reaches 0, the characters have enough clues and can solve the mystery.

Difficulty	Complexity	Example
Easy	25	The mystery is only one part of a single adventure.
Average	50	The mystery forms the basis or a large part of a single adventure.
Challenging	100	The mystery is ongoing and meant to be solved over multiple adventures.
Difficult	150	The mystery is ongoing and is an important subplot for the campaign or an individual character.
Nearly Impossible	200	The mystery is ongoing and is a major plot point in the campaign or for an individual character.

**Clues** are the breadcrumbs which, when put together, point to the solution of a mystery. Collecting a Clue requires making an Evidence check. When a character collects a Clue, they make a damage roll and the GM subtracts that amount from the mystery's Complexity. If they fail to collect the Clue, they instead take damage to their Focus, in addition to whatever other problems that failure might cause.

Each Clue has an **Obfuscation** rating, which acts like its Armor and is subtracted from the damage finding a Clue cause to the Complexity. Obfuscation represents factors which make finding or deciphering a clue more complicated beyond the basic DV of the Evidence check itself.

Type	Obfuscation	Example
Solution is in plain sight	0	The monster's tracks were made in mud just last night and haven't been disturbed.
Solution is somewhat obscured	2	The monster's tracks were made in the mud last night, but it has rained lightly, distorting them.
Solution is quite obscured	4	The monster's tracks have been wiped out and the characters are working from a good sketch.
Solution is intensely obscured	6	The monster's tracks have been wiped out and the characters are working from a verbal description.



Obstacles represent barriers and events which make it harder to solve the mystery. The GM can choose some Obstacles in advance, but others might be added as dictated by gameplay. Obstacles act as a mystery's attacks, doing damage to an Investigator's Focus.

## Solving the Mystery

To solve a mystery, characters must collect Clues by making Evidence checks. Each character involved in an Investigation can make one Evidence check per Clue per day. If a character fails an Evidence check they can try again the next day, although the GM might raise the DC or the Clue's Obfuscation to represent the passage of time. When it is logical to do so, multiple characters can examine the same Clue at the same time. Each should make an Evidence check. If at least one character succeeds, the group has worked together and deciphered the Clue. Any character who failed the check, however, still loses Focus.

There is no set duration for how long making an Evidence check takes. The GM should use their discretion in the matter. Finding a scrap of paper on a body might take a few seconds and might even be performed as an action during combat but doing a detailed examination of a body or interrogating a suspect could take an hour or longer. Some Clue types grant a bonus if a character spends additional time making their Evidence check, granting a +1 (up to a maximum of +3) to the check and the damage for each additional period of time spent on the check equal to the base time needed.

Characters must have a reason to perform an Evidence check. For example, a suspect can't be questioned if the character doesn't know they exist, and monster tracks can't be inspected if the character doesn't have access to the location.

Clues often lead directly from one to another and each requires a separate Evidence check. Investigating a scene, for example, might require one Evidence check and introduce two new Clues: a dead body and monster paw prints. Examining the body and tracking the monster paw prints would then each be rolled as separate Evidence checks.

To perform an Evidence check, a character must make at least one skill check depending on the Clue Type, as noted on the Clue Type table, against a DC set by the GM. If the character succeeds, they roll the Clue's damage and the GM applies it to the mystery's Complexity. Profession Abilities, which replace and/or enhance normal skills, can be used on Evidence checks as appropriate.

## Complexity Damage = Clue Damage Roll – Obfuscation

A successful Evidence check always results in at least 1 point of Damage to a mystery's Complexity, even if a Clue's Obfuscation reduces the damage to 0.

If the character fails, they suffer any listed penalties, including a loss of Focus.

## Deduction Checks

If the players are ever stuck and unsure of where to go next to gather Clues, the GM should ask for a Deduction check (DC:15). If they succeed, then the GM can give the players a hint. Using Deduction in this way causes 1d6 damage to Focus.





## Clues

Clue Type	Example	Skills Used	Damage	Penalty
Deciphering*	Cracking a coded message or a message in a foreign language.	Education or Forgery	1d6 + INT	1d6 Focus Damage.
Evidence Analysis	Working out what a poison is from a sample.	Crafting or Alchemy	1d6 + CRAFT	1d6 Focus Damage. On a fumble, the evidence is damaged. Further Evidence checks involving the evidence are at a -5 penalty.
Examining the Body*	Working out what the murder weapon was based on the wound.	First Aid	1d10 + CRAFT	1d6 Focus Damage. On a fumble, the body is damaged. Further Evidence checks involving the body are at a -5 penalty.
Follow the Money*	Examining a business' books to see if the victim was embezzling	Business	1d6 + INT	1d6 Focus Damage.
Gossip*	Checking with friends in high and low places.	Social Etiquette or Street-wise	1d6 + EMP	1d6 Focus Damage. On a fumble, the character has upset someone they've spoken to.
Interrogation	Questioning a suspect or witness.	Appropriate social skills and Human Perception. This can involve multiple checks and the GM can use Verbal Combat (see <i>Witcher TRPG</i> 176) to determine the outcome.	1d10 + EMP	1d10 Focus Damage. On a fumble, all social interactions with the NPC are at a -5 penalty for the next week.
Investigating the Scene*	Looking over a scene where a killing took place for Clues.	Perception	1d6 + INT	1d6 Focus Damage. On a fumble, the scene is compromised and Evidence checks involving Clues found at the scene (tracks, evidence, etc.) are at a -3 penalty.
Mystical Examination	Using mystical senses and training to search for lingering auras, telltale signs of spellcasting.	Magic Training	1d10 + INT	1d10 Focus Damage. On a fumble, roll once on the spellcasting fumble table (see <i>Witcher TRPG</i> 166) and apply the results.
Research*	Looking through old texts on monsters.	Education or Monster Lore	1d10 + INT	1d10 Focus Damage.
Shadowing	Following a suspect. A stakeout.	Stealth	1d6 + INT	1d6 Focus Damage. Possible confrontation with the person being stalked/watched.
Tracking	Identifying and following a set of monster prints found at the crime scene.	Wilderness Survival or Monster Lore	1d6 + INT	1d6 Focus Damage. On a fumble, any tracking attempt takes too long and reduces the number of remaining Evidence checks allowed by anyone participating by 1.

\*+1 bonus (maximum +3) to Evidence check and damage per each additional time increment spent.



## Obstacles

No mystery is without complications, represented in the Investigation system by Obstacles. At the GM's discretion they can deploy an Obstacle to bedevil the player characters. These should be played out, with the players presenting solutions to deal with or maneuver past the Obstacle, then rolling a skill check (or multiple checks, if the GM feels they are warranted) based on their solution against a DC set by the GM.

If the character succeeds, all characters involved in the investigation that day lose 2 Focus. If they fail, all characters involved in the investigation that day lose 1d6 + 2 Focus. If the skill check is a fumble, the character who made it loses 3 additional Focus, even if the overall check was a success.

GMs are free to deploy, or not deploy, Obstacles when it is logical to do so. GMs who want rough guidelines on how often to use Obstacles, potential DCs, and examples of Obstacle types can refer to the following tables.

### Suggested Obstacles per Day Spent Investigating

Obstacle Type	Example
Easy or Average	1 at DC 14
Challenging or Difficult	2 at DC 14 or 1 at DC 18
Nearly Impossible	3 at DC 14, 2 at DC 18, or 1 at DC 20

### Obstacles Types

Obstacle Type	Example
Authority	A local official doesn't want the investigation to continue.
Conspiracy	Someone is trying to obscure the evidence.
Distraction	Another event makes it difficult to focus on the investigation
Gossip Mill	Local chatter about the character(s) makes others reluctant to work with them.
Exhaustion	The spirit is willing, but the body isn't.
Missing Clue	A Clue simply isn't available at the moment and the lack of it is frustrating, wearing down Focus. For example, someone who needs to be questioned won't be accessible until tomorrow or the characters are looking in entirely the wrong place for evidence.
Passage of Time	Time has passed since the crime took place, obscuring evidence and dulling memory.
Poor Environment	The crime took place in an active war zone.
Red Herring	Something that looks like a Clue isn't. Red herrings should never be presented to the players as an Obstacle. Instead, present them as an Evidence check. If they beat the DC, they realize the red herring isn't a Clue (for this mystery, at least). If they fail, tell them they haven't deciphered the Clue and roll damage as if they had failed an Evidence check.
Unfamiliar Situation	The crime involves something the character has never encountered before.
Weather	A rainstorm has washed away tracks.

### Ticking Clock Mysteries

One unusual Obstacle, which deserves its own mention, is the Ticking Clock. In mysteries with this Obstacle, the characters must finish their investigation within a set time period or fail to find the solution. Some Ticking Clock Mysteries are obvious, with the characters aware of their time limit. For example, they might think a friend innocent of a crime but only have three days to prove it before the accused is tried, convicted, and immediately executed. Sometimes, the time limit is a secret and players do not know they're racing a deadline. For example, they might be hunting a killer monster that is actually the secret pet of a traveling merchant. The merchant leaves town tomorrow so the characters need to figure out not only what the monster is, but that it is hiding in the merchant's wagon before the wandering purveyor of goods skips town.

The only trick to setting up a Ticking Clock mystery is deciding when to set the deadline. Parties dedicated to the task of solving a mystery can make usually make between 3 to 10 Evidence checks per day, depending on how many characters are involved in the matter. Give them enough time to solve the mystery (with as much or as little wiggle room as you feel appropriate) and then set the deadline.



## Finding Inspiration

Even with this system for guidance, plotting out a mystery can still be tough. In that case, we recommend doing what all the greats do: steal. Your local bookstore or library will have dozens and maybe even hundreds of mystery novels, and there's just as many episodes of mystery-themed television shows out there for you to serve as inspiration. No, none of them take place in the world of the **Witcher**, but with a little adaption, you'll have a blueprint for a mystery plot!

## Recovering Focus

Much like the body, the mind benefits from rest. After a good night's sleep (at least six hours) characters recover an amount of Focus equal to their Will. If their Deduction skill value is 5 or higher, they recover an additional 1 Focus. If it is 8 or higher, they recover an additional 2 Focus.

## Crafting a Mystery

To create a mystery, the GM has to figure out the beginning and the end, then work to fill in the middle.

The beginning is all about the nature of the mystery. Most mysteries can be boiled down to a single question such as "Who killed Lord Body?" or "What monster is stalking the streets at night?" Once a GM figures out the question, they've got their beginning.

The ending is the answer to the question posed at the beginning such as "Lady Body killed Lord Body." Or "A higher vampire is stalking the streets at night."

With the beginning and ending worked out, the GM can work out the Clues and Obstacles that complete the two. GMs can use the following table as a guideline for how many Clues the characters need to find to solve the mystery by cross-referencing its Complexity against its Obfuscation

Average Clue Obfuscation	0	2	4	6
Complexity				
Easy	3	4	5	7
Average	5	6	8	12
Challenging	10	13	17	25
Difficult	15	19	25	38
Nearly Impossible	20	25	33	50

GMs should consider the following guidelines when crafting a mystery.

- The first Clue of a mystery should be fairly obvious. In the case of a monster attack or a murder, the characters will probably want to investigate the scene of the attack or the body.
- Clues often logically lead to other Clues, forming investigation chains. Questioning a witness might point out a suspect who should be interrogated. Examining the scene of a monster attack might locate a set of tracks to follow. Performing an autopsy to identify the murder weapon might lead the players to search the local guard armory for a pike that is either bloody or suspiciously scoured clean. If the GM can draw a



line from each Clue in a mystery to at least two other Clues (one it follows and one it leads to) there's a good chance the players can find enough information to reduce the Complexity to 0 and solve the mystery without being prompted or given excessive hints.

- Stay fluid. Players go in unexpected directions and sometimes the dice lead to bad results. In order to keep the mystery going, GMs might need to change the location or circumstances of a Clue, replace one Clue with a new one, or invent in a new Clue entirely. Also be aware Clues might spontaneously occur through roleplay. For example, while roleplaying an unrelated haggling session between an NPC and a player character, the GM might, while improvising the interaction, accidentally reveal information about the mystery that they didn't intend to share. If this occurs, don't punish the players by refusing to allow the Clue. Instead, count it as an automatic success on an Evidence check and reduce the mystery's Complexity.
- Staying flexible with Obstacles is also important since many of them will be occur as a result of activity by the characters and can't be predicted in advance. For example, Lady Body might be content to leave the party alone until the player characters get too close to the truth. At that point, she might insist the local sheriff run those meddling kids out of town.
- There won't always be a Clue where the players seek one. This is especially true in mysteries with a high Complexity. A character looking for their lost sibling might go months without finding a Clue because they are traveling in an area where neither their sibling nor the kidnappers have ever been. Characters still lose Focus when they fail an Evidence check (which they automatically do) when looking for Clues that don't exist.
- Sometimes, the players will solve the mystery before their characters do. When that happens, it is up to the GM to decide how they want to proceed. It could be that, despite figuring out "who done it," the local authorities want more evidence before they'll make an arrest and so the players have to keep investigating. Or it could be the GM decides the mystery isn't any fun without the unknown hanging over the players' heads and declares it solved. They might even change the question forming the mystery from "what monster killed the baker" to "where is the monster who killed the baker" to keep going. It is up to the GM to decide what course of action is best for their table.
- Likewise, sometimes the players come up with a solution for the mystery early and be completely wrong. The GM doesn't need to tell them they're off track and still have more Complexity to mark off. False accusations and conclusions are part and parcel of the genre. Once the players realize they're on the wrong path, they can veer back to solving the mystery; and if they never realize it? That's just more plot fodder for down the line. A person falsely accused of murder can be a dangerous enemy!
- The Investigation system can be used as nothing more than a series of rolls to keep track of progress, but it is more properly used as a springboard for roleplay. GMs can use it as a checklist if they like, but it works better when the Clues and Obstacles serve as a skeleton upon which they and the group can hang roleplaying opportunities. Describe the scene of the murder! Mention the smell of the mud and the strange, elongated nature of the tracks! Play out the interrogation, using the rolls to guide the direction of the conversation. Have fun with it!

## Failing to Solve the Mystery

It is alright if the characters don't solve the mystery! Sometimes the murderer gets away, or they identify the wrong monster. That doesn't mean the adventure has to end. If the murderer gets away, the players might have to pick up the hunt further down the road. If they fail to identify the monster, they might still have to fight it, but they'll be less prepared. Don't let failing to solve the mystery grind the game to a halt.



## Example Mystery: Centipede Hunt

A giant centipede attacked and destroyed a trader's wagon outside of town three days ago. There were no survivors.

**Complexity:** Easy (25)

### Possible Clues

- **Investigating the Scene** (Perception DC:14. Obfuscation 0. 1d6 + INT damage). The wagon was torn to shreds. The metal frame that held up the canvas has been warped and twisted. The ground nearby is oddly soft, and there are long drag marks leading from the soft patch to the remains of the wagon. There is no sign of any remains.
- **Evidence Analysis** (Crafting DC:18. Obfuscation 2. 1d6 + CRAFT damage). The metal frame of the wagon is melted in places. The pattern on the edges suggest it was done with a strong acid and not heat.
- **Tracking** (Wilderness Survival DC:14. Obfuscation 0. 1d6 + INT damage). The soft patch on the ground resembles freshly churned earth, similar to the trails left behind by digging moles.
- **Tracking** (Wilderness Survival DC:18. Obfuscation 2. 1d6 + INT damage). The drag marks on the ground seem to have been made by something large and long. There are hundreds of equally sized, perfectly aligned dimples on either side of the drag marks, running in parallel to them.
- **Research** (Education or Monster Lore DC:14. Obfuscation 2. 1d10 + INT damage). The Clues uncovered suggests a burrowing creature of some kind. One that can likely spit or secrete acid.

### Possible Obstacles

- **Weather:** It begins to rain, making it harder to find Clues.
- **Red Herring:** The characters find what appears to be the remains of a local mage's stolen diary in the wreckage. The mage in question has a reputation for having a nasty temper and using acid-based spells.





## Example Mystery: The Knockers' Clues

A group of knockers holds key information about what lurks deep within an ancient mine. Their leader won't tell the characters, however, unless they prove they truly understand the concerns of the knockers and the history of the area.

**Complexity:** Challenging (100)

### Possible Clues

- **Interrogation** (Verbal Combat or Opposed Social skill checks. Obfuscation 2. 1d10 + EMP damage) x 10. The characters can chat with different knockers in the community to find out what concerns them. After 10 different interrogations, however, the information begins to repeat itself. If the GM desires, these interrogations can lead to small side quests which, when completed, allow the characters to automatically succeed at the Clue check.
- **Gossip** (Streetwise DC:18. Obfuscation 4. 1d6 + EMP damage) x 2. The knockers are reluctant to talk to outsiders but with some persuasion they'll be willing to share gossip about local lore. They can do this twice before the information they receive just repeats itself.
- **Research** (Education DC:18. Obfuscation 2. 1d10 + INT damage). While the knockers don't keep a library, there's one in a nearby town. There, the characters can learn more about the history of the surrounding area.
- **Research** (Monster Lore DC:15. Obfuscation 2. 1d10 + INT damage). Learning or remembering information about knockers helps.
- **Shadowing** (Opposed Stealth check. Obfuscation 4. 1d6 + INT damage). This isn't as malicious as it sounds. By simply following and observing knockers as they go about their day-to-day business, the characters can learn more about them.
- **Tracking** (Wilderness Survival DC:14. Obfuscation 4. 1d6 + INT damage). Knockers are clever beings but not particularly powerful. By examining the tracks left behind by passing creatures, the characters have a better understanding of what threatens them in their day-to-day lives.
- **Evidence Analysis** (Crafting DC:18. Obfuscation 4. 1d6 + CRAFT damage) x2. One of the best ways to understand a society is to understand their technology. Time spent exploring how the knockers make and use their tools and crafts helps them better understand their culture. This can be performed twice before the insights no longer provide new information.

### Possible Obstacles

- **Gossip Mill:** Knockers are naturally nervous about outsiders. All sorts of rumors have sprung up about the characters.
- **Conspiracy:** A rival of the knocker leader wants to ensure the characters fail and embarrasses her.
- **Unfamiliar Situation:** Carousing in a knocker community isn't normal for the characters and the unfamiliarity is taxing.
- **Poor Environment:** The low light, dust-filled caverns, and small passages preferred by knockers doesn't sit well with the eyes, lungs, or backs of the characters.
- **Passage of Time:** The longer this investigation goes on, the harder it is to focus on the urgency of the matter.
- **Authority:** A local merchant wants to re-open the mines, but the knockers are an obstacle. Convincing the merchant not to send in the troops before they can get the information they need from the knockers will be tough.

## More About the Examples

The Centipede Hunt represents one of the classic *Witcher* mystery: figuring out what monster the party will face in advance so they can prepare for the battle. That's the sort of straightforward mystery that makes an excellent front half of a one-shot session. The party investigates the scene of the attack then preps to face the monster and finally hunts it down.

Meanwhile, the Knockers' Clues, is the sort of mystery that could play out over several sessions. The players need to work hard to earn the trust of the Knocker clan and get the information they need about the abandoned mine. For example, the Knocker village might serve as a temporary home base or regular stopping point between other adventures in the area, with the players solving the mystery one segment of a session at a time.



# Contracts

## Vague Contracts

Some of the following contracts have been left vague with the intention of letting the Game Master decide not only how the hunt should play out but also what type of monster the players should encounter at the end of the hunt.

Very rarely is a witcher directly summoned by their clientele. During the Golden Age there were circumstances where kingdoms sent word to a witcher school specifically for their aid but even this was rare. Especially after the fall of the witcher schools, most people hire witchers by either approaching a witcher who passes through their town or by posting contracts on the local sign post and hoping a witcher on the path will respond. The following contracts can be used as plot hooks or “side quests” during your larger campaign or could even be used as the foundation for entire one-shot adventures.

ON BEHALF OF DUKE ZIELIŃSKI, MAJORDOMO  
LEZNICA WILL REWARD ANYONE CAPABLE OF RIDDING  
THE CATACOMBS OF THE ZIELIŃSKI MANOR OF  
ROTFIENDS WITH A HANDSOME BOUNTY OF 200  
CROWNS TO BE PAID UPON COMPLETION OF THE  
EXTERMINATION. BE WARNED THIS IS NO SMALL  
UNDERTAKING. THE CATACOMBS MUST BE KEPT IN  
PRISTINE ORDER.

Dear Witcher, sir (if any be around),

My brother been ett up by a cyclops not but 6  
days ago. I seen the beast roamin the foothills  
but the damn thing's too big for a fella like  
meself. I ain't got much but I got a good-  
for-nothin' son and I hear you Witchers'll take  
youngsters just as soon as you'll take coin.



I have need of a skilled witcher. A magically-attuned associate of mine has made a grave error and without the aid of a witcher I fear this oversight may cause the deaths of many. I will elaborate when we meet in person. The courier will relay to you the meeting's location.

Good people,  
Take pity on a poor young artist making her way in this dark and depraved world! Upon my nightly walk I have seen such a grave sight that I am now desperately in need of a well-meaning ruffian to guard my person! For last night upon the moors I spied a beast of no small stature assaulting a woman of dubious virtue! Alas, the beast did spy me as I watch from afar and now I fear it may come for me in the night! I can afford only a few crowns of bounty but I will speak well of my saviour to my patron, Duchess Locklear!

Spotted somethin down on the river that weren't sposed to be there. Don't know what it was though. Mighta been half in a tankard, if i'm honest. Fur sure the thing had wings and a face that'd make a cow cry. ain't got much money but the alderman might pay for it. Saw it fly off toward the old ruins.



*Dear Master Witcher,*

*I would not normally have sought the help of a mutant such as yourself, but I fear you are the only one who can alleviate my current predicament. I have yet to see a monster but I do whole-heartedly believe I have placed under some form of curse. My nights have become a living hell as of recently and I find myself thinking strange and unsettling thought in my waking hours. The priests have as of yet failed to help me and I fear the Kreve has abandoned me. It is in desperation that I call for your aid. Of course I have not forgotten your bounty. 1000 Crowns to be paid on completion.*

*—Samuel Riddick*

*I'm in desperate need of a witcher or even a magician. A day ago, my husband went into the swamp to hunt for game and he hasn't returned since. His brother went in after him this morning but he hasn't come back either. They're good men and they've seen their share of danger so I'm sure they're still alive. I can pay a hundred crowns.*

*To whom it may concern,*

*I have recently moved my family into my uncle's palatial estate and I have suffered indignities that require the services of a witcher or some other monster-hunting specialist. No one is yet harmed but I will not stay another night if the creature haunting my every movement is not dispatched. The villagers have spouted all manner of superstition about woodland spirits and appeasement but I won't have it. I have seen a small shape darting about my cellar and heard rustling beneath my marital bed. I will pay a reasonable sum of 200 Crowns.*

*—Reynard De Attre*



Gentle People,

I am in desperate need of the help of a witcher or another monster hunting professional. I will pay a high bounty to anyone able to put me in contact with such an individual. I cannot enumerate the danger I have found myself in as even I have yet to truly fathom the depth of this matter. But I can assure you that without the aid of a skilled sword arm and a keen mind I will be dead before the summer comes. Even as I write this missive my hand quivers and my eyes are drawn to every dark corner and sudden sound in my bed chamber. If there is anyone with experience in monster hunting or knowledge of a monster hunter, I urge them to respond to this message with haste.

It is with a heavy heart that I must officially address the disappearance of our good Pawel. He was a good boy and a sturdy woodsman. I cannot claim to have any idea what may have possessed him to enter the wood on the new moon but I must be explicitly clear to all members of this community: There will be no more searching of the wood. The next new moon approaches and we must prepare.



Dear Master Witcher,

I hope that you will read this message and come quickly to the Damiani estate. We are in great need of a witcher such as yourself. For the past several years I have been employed as a servant under the care of the Damiani family. I have had no reason to quarrel and I have always been blessed with the good sense to know my place. But I fear my master's well being may be at risk now and I have sent word for you without the approval of my master.

Recently, my master has been entertaining a woman from town who strikes the other servants and I as odd. She is a winsome woman and master Damiani seems enthralled by her but she is strange and their courtship has been so sudden and unnatural. The woman is pale as alabaster and none of us servants have ever heard her speak. Master Damiani just brought her home one night and now for the past few days she has been here nearly every night. Glendys in the kitchen caught the woman's eye one time and she said it was cold and black like a wolf's eyes.

We don't have very much money, Master Witcher but I'm sure once he's freed of this hex, Master Damiani will reward you handsomely with gold and jewels. Please come quickly. The nights are uneasy and I could have sworn I saw a shape movin' in the servant's quarters last night.





Take a glimpse into the Golden Age of Witchers, when monsters roamed the world and you could hardly travel to the next town without running into a cyclops or a foglet! Through the journal of the founder of the Griffin School of Witchers, Erland of Larvik, you'll encounter many new monsters; some of which haven't been seen in generations.

A Witcher's Journal is a supplement for the Witcher Pen & Paper RPG which gives you a number of new monsters and intriguing plot hooks to use in your game as well as new lore and an indepth investigation system.

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